Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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1. Aims

1.1 At Maritime Academy Trust we believe that young children:

- are unique;
- need a sense of belonging and thrive in a positive, secure environment;
- learn through play in an integrated way ;
  Should be supported to become confident communicators
- should be encouraged to be independent and self-regulate;
- should be supported by skilled adults who understand child development;
- learn best in a thought- provoking environment with opportunities to practice and apply previous learning;
- should have opportunities to take risks, develop resilience and perseverance;
- have a curriculum offer that supports children's foundational knowledge and learning behaviours ready for their next steps in education:
- need parents, carers and school to work in partnership.

1.2 This policy aims to ensure that **all** our children receive an excellent start to their education.

1.3 This policy is underpinned by Maritime Academy Trust's Early Years Principles.

2. Legislation

2.1 This policy is based on requirements set out in the Early Years Statutory Framework for School based groups 2026

3. Structure of the EYFS

3.1 At Maritime Academy Trust the EYFS consists of provision for 2 to 5-year olds either in Nursery or Reception Classes.

3.2 The nurseries cater for 2 to 4 year-old children and are staffed by a qualified early years teacher or a qualified teacher with qualified teacher status (QTS), assisted by teaching assistants. The reception classes are staffed by a teacher and teaching assistant. Both nursery and reception have a lead teacher, responsible for the day to day running of their year group. All Early Years provisions are overseen by a Senior Leader.

3.3 Staff within early years are supported to become experts within their phase with continuing professional opportunities and bespoke training.

4. Curriculum

4.1 The early years curriculum we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- it builds on what our children already know and can do;
- it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- it offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- it provides a rich, playful and stimulating learning environment facilitating the characteristics of effective learning;
- it is systematically planned to ensure all learning is practised, applied and revisited;
- It is relevant to each school's context and ambitious for each child.

4.2 The curriculum outlined in the Early Years Statutory Framework 2026 includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, three areas known as the Prime Areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

4.3 The prime areas are:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development.

4.4 The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design.

4.5 Equally important are the Characteristics of Effective Learning which ensure children develop the skills to be a learner. These are:

- playing and exploring
- active learning and;
- creating and critical thinking.

4.6 Practitioners plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas. Practitioners also consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and differentiated curriculum. The content of the curriculum will be taught in a logical progression, ensuring fluency and depth of understanding.

4.7 Planning includes:

- the long-term overview of what children need to learn to have secure foundations for the next stage of their education;
- medium term planning focused on priorities of learning for each child;
- daily plans responsive to observation and assessment.

4.8 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. Early identification of needs and barriers to learning are key foci of Maritime early years.

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

4.10 Teaching is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, and providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. It also takes account of the equipment adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations.

4.11 Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do, as well as taking account of their interests and dispositions to learn (Characteristics of Effective Learning), and how practitioners use this information to plan children's next steps in learning and to monitor their progress.

4.12 Teaching is clearly differentiated and delivered in whole groups, small groups and one to one sessions. Adults join children in their child-initiated activities creating opportunities for shared, sustained thinking.

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

5. Assessment

5.1 At Maritime Academy Trust, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning processes. Practitioners observe children to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers.

5.2 When a child is aged between two and three, practitioners review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the three prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

5.3 Within 6 weeks of starting Reception, each child will be assessed using the Reception Baseline (RBA). Alongside this assessment teachers will also undertake a Trust baseline assessment for the purpose of planning for the child's next steps.

5.4 At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the seventeen early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- meeting expected levels of development (expected);
- not yet reaching expected levels of development (emerging).

5.5 The profile reflects the teacher's professional knowledge of a child and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers and Year 1 colleagues.

5.6 The profile is moderated internally and Trustwide,in partnership with other schools, to ensure consistent assessment and accurate judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

6. Working with parents

6.1 We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

6.2 Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a holistic picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

6.3 Each child is assigned a key person, this could be the class teacher or a teaching assistant, who helps to ensure that learning and care is tailored to meet the child's needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

6.4 Parents will be invited into Nursery and Reception to share and be involved in their children's learning. We recognise the research on a child's home learning environment and its impact on a child's progress. We therefore plan our support, even before the children start school.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

7.1 Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

8. Monitoring arrangements

8.1 This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Trustees every two years.

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

This checklist lists the policies and procedures that we must have according the EYFS statutory framework.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	**Where can it be found?**
Safeguarding policy and procedures (including safer recruiting)	See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	First Aid and Administration of Medicines Policy Control of Infections Policy
Administering medicines policy	First Aid and Administration of Medicines Policy
Allergy policy	School website
Safer Sleep procedure	Risk assessment and guidance
Screen time in early years guidance	Screen time policy (EYFS)
Absence and attendance follow up protocol	Attendance whole school policy
Safer eating and choking guidance	Risk assessments (EYFS)
Safer recruitment	Safeguarding
Emergency evacuation procedure	Fire Safety Management 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
SEND code of conduct	SEND Policy
Behaviour	Behaviour and Relationships policy
Restrictive Intervention	Restrictive Intervention Policy
Intimate Care Policy	Intimate Care Policy
Food Policy	Whole School Food Policy Early Years Nutrition Policy