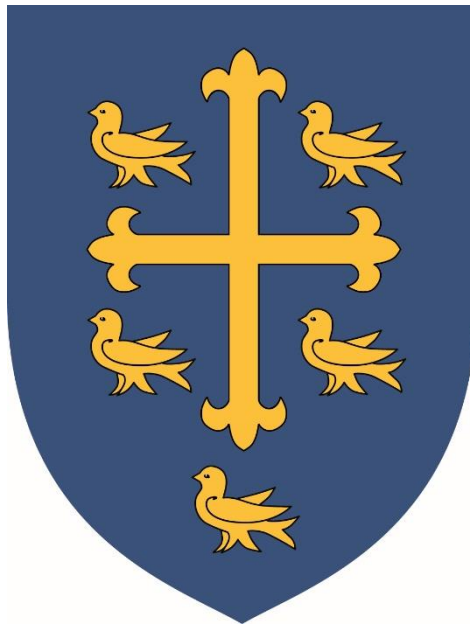


St. Edward's Catholic Primary School



Early Years Policy 2025/2026

'Jesus is at the heart of all that we do'

At St. Edward's, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children and adults in our school, and we have the same expectation of our staff and volunteers.

Policy agreed/Signed by: _____

Date: _____

(Mr K Connolly – Chair of Governors)

Agreed on:

Review date:

Contents:

Statement of Intent

1. Legislation
 2. Roles and responsibilities
 3. Aims
 4. Learning and development
 5. Inclusion
 6. The learning environment and outdoor spaces
 7. Observation, Assessment and Planning
 8. Safeguarding and welfare
 9. Mobile phones and devices
 10. Health and safety
 11. Staff taking medication or other substances
 12. Staffing
 13. Information and records
 14. Parental involvement
 15. Transition periods
- Monitoring and review

Statement of intent

At St. Edwards Catholic School, we greatly value the importance of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant DfE guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The principles of Catholic Social Teaching are embedded in the Early Years curriculum and practice, ensuring that Christ remains at the centre of all learning and development. Leaders and governors demonstrate a clear and unwavering commitment to the Catholic life and mission of the school, ensuring that the children experience the Gospel values in action from the very beginning of their education.

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a **broad and balanced curriculum** that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- **Quality and consistency** in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- A **close working partnership** between staff and parents and/or carers.
- Every child is included and supported through **equality of opportunity** and **anti-discriminatory practice**.

Signed by:

_____ Mrs. Kennett Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

1. Legislation

- 1.0. This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2025 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.0. The governing board has the overall responsibility for ensuring there is a policy in place to safeguard children that includes an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child, the use of mobile phones and cameras, and staff safeguarding training requirements. These issues are addressed in part in this policy and in further detail in St. Edwards Catholic School's Safeguarding and Child Protection and Policy.
- 2.1. The governing board has the overall responsibility for ensuring there is a policy in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. These issues are addressed in St. Edwards Catholic School's Safeguarding and Child Protection and Policy – Appendix 3 (Allegations of about a member of Staff, governor or volunteer).
- 2.2. The governing board has the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- 2.3. The governing board has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 2.4. The governing board has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in St. Edwards Catholic School's Diocesan Adopted Complaints Policy.
- 2.5. Mrs. Carr (EYFS Lead), in conjunction with the Mrs. Kennett (Headteacher), has responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.
- 2.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for familiarising themselves with, and following, this policy.

3. Principles into Practice

- 3.0. Four guiding principles shape our practice:

Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.

Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between St. Edwards Catholic School and parents.

Children **develop** and **learn** in different ways and at different rates.

3.1. To put these principles into practice, St. Edwards Catholic School:

Provides a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.

Promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Works in partnership with parents.

Plans challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.

Implements a key person approach to develop close relationships with children.

Provides a safe and secure learning environment.

Catholic Social Teaching

Our EYFS curriculum aims to provide a holistic EYFS education that not only meets the National Curriculum standards but also reflects the values of the Catholic social teachings. By embracing diversity, fostering creativity, and promoting social and spiritual development, we aspire to nurture well-rounded individuals who appreciate the power of EYFS in shaping a harmonious and compassionate society.

4. Learning and Development

4.0. At St Edward's Catholic Primary School, children's learning and personal development are at the heart of the curriculum. Our school curriculum is underpinned by the Early Years Curriculum's requirements and a shared belief that successful learners are inspired and challenged to grow to be thoughtful citizens of the future. The curriculum reflects our school vision of following in Jesus' example and is underpinned by Catholic Social Teaching. Every child is recognised as a unique individual made in the image of God. They are taught to show love and respect for God's creations. They also learn to look after each other as part of a school family and learn to make the right choices.

4.1. We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the early learning goals.

4.2. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two sections – prime and specific; however, all the sections are interconnected and important.

4.3. The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

Communication and language

- Listening, Attention and Understanding

- Speaking

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships

Physical development

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills

- 4.4. Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

Literacy

- Comprehension
- Word Reading
- Writing

Mathematics

- Number
- Numerical Patterns

Understanding the world

- Past and Present
- People, Culture and Communities
- The Natural World

Expressive Arts and Design

- Creating with Materials
- Being imaginative and Expressive

- 4.5. Activities are planned to reflect children's interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience.

- 4.6. Class teachers will discuss any cause for concern in a child's progress, especially in the prime areas of learning, with the child's parents. A strategy of support will be agreed upon and consideration will be taken as to whether the child may have a special educational need or disability which requires additional support.

- 4.7. St. Edward's Catholic School takes reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good

standard of English. During assessment, if a child is found to not have a strong grasp on English, the child's class teacher will contact the child's parents to establish their home language skills to assess if there is cause for concern about a language delay.

4.8. Each area of learning and development will be implemented through a mix of adult-led and pupil-initiated activity. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further. St. Edwards Catholic School will respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through friendly and positive interaction.

4.9. Activities are planned with regard to three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things.
- Active Learning – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

4.10. By the end of Foundation Stage, we expect children to be within the expected level of development by achieving the 17 Early Learning Goals.

5. Inclusion

5.0. All children are valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender.

5.1. The EYFS curriculum is planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

5.2. The Equality Policy ensures that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

5.3. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by St. Edward's Catholic School's SENCO.

6. The learning environment and outdoor spaces

6.0. The classrooms are organised in such a way that children can explore and learn in a safe environment.

6.1. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area, and daily outdoor activities are planned, unless circumstances, such as the weather, would make outdoor activity inappropriate and unsafe.

6.2. There is one toilet facility available in the EYFS, and there is a disabled facility located near the Reception classes.

7. Observation, Assessment and Planning

- 7.0. Reception staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning.
- 7.1. The staff use key themes, the seasons, key events and the children's interests to draw up medium term plans. In addition to this the children lead the short term activity planning on a day to day basis. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning.
- 7.2. The planning objectives used in Reception are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document.
- 7.3. Reception staff make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support.
- 7.4. Parents will be kept up to date with their child's progress and development by the class teachers in the setting. Parent's evenings are held for pupils in Reception twice a year.
- 7.5. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations. Staff members will observe children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. This information will then be used to shape learning experiences for each child.
- 7.6. Statutory Assessments - Children will complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first 6 weeks of joining Reception, regardless of when they join the class, unless they have been assessed previously. The RBA is an age-appropriate assessment of mathematics and literacy, communication and language, that is delivered in English. It is clearly linked to the learning and development requirements of the EYFS.
- 7.7. In the final term, the children's progress is recorded on to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the Early Learning Goals.
- 7.8. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

8. Safeguarding and Welfare

- 8.0. All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in our care safe and well.
- 8.1. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS are required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

- 8.2. The Lead DSL is Miss K. Costello.
- 8.3. The deputy DSLs are Mrs J Kennett, Mrs Doherty, Mrs A Kendrick, Miss Sankey and Miss Atkins.
- 8.4. The DSL is responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate.
- 8.5. The deputy DSL will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL.
- 8.6. The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required.
- 8.7. Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect

9. Mobile Phones and Devices

- 9.0. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' refers to any electronic device that can be used to take images or record videos, including tablets.

Use of mobile phones by staff members

- 9.1. Staff members must not use personal mobile phones or cameras when children are present.
- 9.2. Staff may use mobile phones on school premises outside of working hours when no children are present.
- 9.3. Staff may use mobile phones in the staffroom during breaks and non-contact time.
- 9.4. Mobile phones should be safely stored and in silent mode whilst children are present.
- 9.5. Staff may take mobile phones on trips, but they must only be used in emergencies and should not be used when children are present. Mobile phones must not be used to take images or videos at any time during trips unless agreed with Mrs Kennett prior to the trip.
- 9.6. Staff who do not adhere to this policy will face disciplinary action.
- 9.7. Staff may use their professional judgement in emergency situations.
- 9.8. Staff must report any concerns about another staff member's use of mobile phones to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Use of mobile phones by parents, visitors and contractors

- 9.9. Parents, visitors and contractors are not permitted to take photographs or record videos without prior permission.

- 9.10. Parents may take photographs and videos only containing their own child during school events but this is not allowed during Mass.
- 9.11. Parents may take group photographs at school events but only with the informed consent of the parents of the children involved.
- 9.12. St. Edward's Catholic School strongly advises against the publication of any photographs or videos taken at St. Edward's Catholic School or school events on social media.
- 9.13. Staff must report all concerns about parents, visitors and contractors to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Use of St. Edwards Catholic School's mobile phones and cameras

- 9.14. Staff are provided with a school device to ensure that only school devices are used to take photographs and videos.
- 9.15. School devices must have passcode protection.
- 9.16. School devices must only be used for work related matters.
- 9.17. School devices must only be used to take photographs in the presence of another staff member and only with the consent of the child's parent.
- 9.18. Staff must not take photographs of bruising or injuries for child protection reasons. Instead, recording concerns forms and body maps are used to record observations relating to child protection concerns – these can be acquired from the DSL.
- 9.19. School devices must not be taken off school premises without prior written permission from Mrs. Kennett (Head teacher).
- 9.20. Where staff members have concerns over material on a school device, they must report all concerns to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

10. Health, Safety and Welfare

- 10.0. The main First Aid box is situated in the First Aid Room close to the Reception classrooms. First Aid bags are kept by all members of staff for use at breaktimes and are always taken when groups of students go out of school on organised trips or to participate in sporting events together with continually updated student medical information.
- 10.1. Only medicine prescribed to a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist will be administered.
- 10.2. St. Edward's Catholic School's Managing Medical Needs Policy outlines the procedures for administering medicines.

- 10.3. The class teachers will report any accident or injury involving a child to their parents on the day it occurs, and any first-aid treatment administered to a child will also be reported to their parents.
- 10.4. Accidents and injuries will be recorded in an accident book, located in St. Edward's Catholic School. A text messaging service for parents has also been implemented to speed up notification of an injury and to ensure parents are aware.
- 10.5. Mrs. Kennett (Head teacher) will report any serious accident, illness, injury, or death of a child whilst in St. Edwards Catholic School's care to Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable, but within 14 days of the incident occurring. Local child protection agencies will also be notified.
- 10.6. St. Edward's Catholic School has a Fire Evacuation Plan in place.
- 10.7. Mrs. Kennett (Head teacher) will notify Ofsted of any incidents of food poisoning affecting two or more children within 14 days of the incident.
- 10.8. Information about any dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and any special health requirements a child has will be recorded and shared with all relevant staff. Individual allergy plans will be created with parents and healthcare professionals and reviewed when needed.
- 10.9. A paediatric first aider must be present in the room during mealtimes.
- 10.10. Staff must supervise children closely and face them during mealtimes to watch for choking risks.
- 10.11. Staff will log any choking incidents, recording the incident, response time, and follow-up actions.
- 10.12. Dining areas are set up to ensure children are visible and safely seated.
- 10.13. Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- 10.14. Smoking is not permitted on the school premises.
- 10.15. The Intimate Care Policy outlines the full details related to changing children nappies and toileting support. Staff will use safe and discreet practices to ensure a child's dignity and safety is ensured during intimate care routines.
- 10.16. The Health and Safety Policy outlines the full health and safety policies and procedures.

11. Staff taking medication or other substances

- 11.0. St. Edward's Catholic School implements a zero-tolerance approach to drugs and alcohol misuse, as outlined in the Drug and Alcohol Policy.

- 11.1. The use of alcohol or any other substance that may affect the ability to care for children by a member of staff will not be tolerated. If there is a reason to believe a member of staff is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance, they will not be allowed to work directly with children and further action will be taken.
- 11.2. Any member of staff taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children will seek medical advice. Staff will only be allowed to work directly with the children if it is confirmed that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after children properly.

12. Staffing

- 12.0. A robust Recruitment Policy is in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable.
- 12.1. Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.
- 12.2. Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.
- 12.3. All members of staff who have contact with children and families will be supervised by Mrs. Carr (EYFS Lead). The supervision will provide opportunities for staff to:
 - Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
 - Identify solutions to address issues.
 - Receive coaching to improve their effectiveness.
- 12.4. There will be at least one member of staff on St. Edward's Catholic School premises at all times who has a current paediatric first-aid (PFA) certificate.
- 12.5. Any member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking after a group of children will also hold a PFA certificate.
- 12.6. St. Edward's Catholic School will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years.
- 12.7. St. Edward's Catholic School provides a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the early year's foundation stage'.
- 12.8. Only members of staff with level 2 English and maths qualifications will count towards the staffing ratios at level 3.
- 12.9. St. Edward's Catholic School adopts the following staffing ratios:

13. For children aged three and over:

- Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, there is one member of staff for every 13 children, and at least one other member of staff holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification.
 - Where a member of staff does not hold QTS, early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification, there is one member of staff for every eight children. At least one staff member holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification, and at least half of all other staff hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification.
- 13.0. Only under exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and safety of children is maintained, will changes be made to the ratios.
- 13.1. Parents will be informed about staffing arrangements and, when relevant and practical, will be involved in staffing arrangement decisions.
- 13.2. Each child is assigned a key person whose role it is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs.

14. Information and Records

- 14.0. Information is stored in line with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with regard to St. Edward's Catholic School's Data Protection Policy.
- 14.1. The following information is recorded for each child:
- The child's name and date of birth
 - The name and address of every parent or carer who is known to St. Edward's Catholic School, and which parent or carer the child normally lives with
- 14.2. The emergency contact details of the child's parents or carer
- 14.3. The following information about St. Edward's Catholic School is recorded:
- St. Edward's Catholic School's name, address and telephone number
 - St. Edward's Catholic School's certificate of registration
 - The name, address and telephone number of anyone who will regularly be in unsupervised contact with the children
 - A daily record of the names of the children being cared for in St. Edward's Catholic School, their hours of attendance, and the names of each child's key person
- 14.4. The following information is made available to parents:

- St. Edward's Catholic School's privacy notice for parents and pupils
- How St. Edward's Catholic School delivers the EYFS and how parents can access more information
- The daily routine and the activities offered in St. Edward's Catholic School's EYFS and how parents can assist their child's learning at home
- How St. Edwards Catholic School's EYFS supports children with SEND
- Details of the food and drink provided to the children
- Information about the policies and procedures in place in EYFS in St. Edward's Catholic School

14.5. Ofsted will be notified if there are any changes to the following:

- The address of St. Edward's Catholic School
- St. Edward's Catholic School's contact details
- The hours during which care is provided
- Any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of St. Edward's Catholic School or any person who cares for, or is in regular contact with, children to look after children

15. Parental Involvement

15.0. We firmly believe that the EYFS cannot function without the enduring support of parents.

15.1. Both parents and children have the opportunity to spend time with staff in their new classroom before starting school. Parents are invited to an induction meeting prior to children starting school and also have the opportunity to meet the class teacher 1:1 to discuss their child's needs and interests before starting school.

15.2. Parents are invited to two parents' evenings during the school year to discuss their child's progress and next steps for learning.

15.3. St. Edward's Catholic School also has an open-door policy and parents are welcome to talk to EYFS staff at the start and end of the school day. For longer appointments with the class teacher or EYFS lead, parents can make an appointment by contacting the school office by telephone or email.

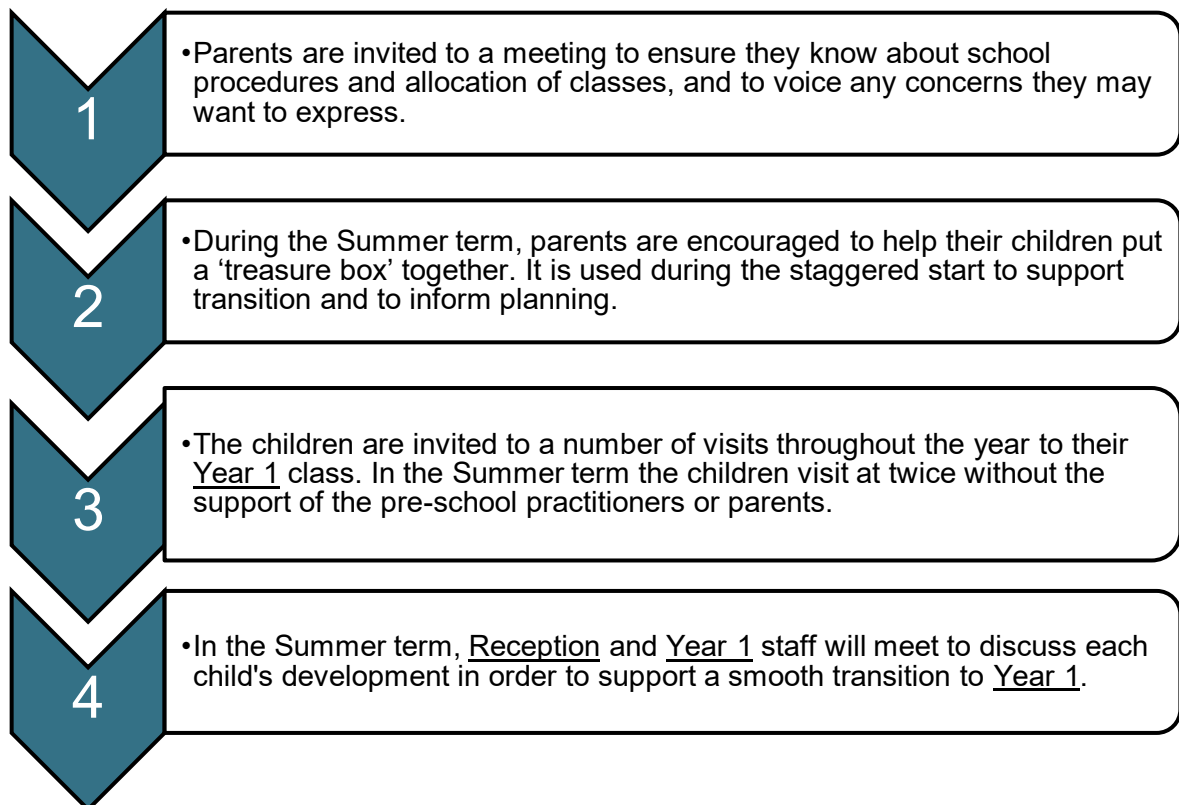
15.4. Senior Leaders offices will be utilised for confidential discussions between staff and parents.

15.5. Parents are asked to sign permission slips for any visits out of school, use of photographs of their child and using the internet at school.

- 15.6. Parents are asked to complete admission forms, a medical form and to write a brief synopsis about their child to help St. Edward's Catholic School to understand their character and personality.
- 15.7. The Reception long term plan is shared on the school website and regular updates are made on the class website page about the learning taking place each in school.

16. Transition Periods

- 16.0. The following process is in place to ensure children's successful transition to Year 1:



17. Monitoring and Review

- 17.0. This policy is reviewed annually by the governing board and Mrs. Kennett.
- 17.1. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 17.2. All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.
- 17.3. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2026.