

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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1. Introduction

Mill Hill Education Group ('the Group') is the trading name of The Mill Hill School Foundation. The Group comprises ten schools currently, six of which have Early Years pupils. Abbot's Hill School is one of those.

2. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Abbot's Hill Nursery and Pre-Prep Curriculum Policy
- Abbot's Hill Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Mill Hill Education Group Safeguarding and Protecting the Welfare of Pupils Policy
- Mill Hill Education Group First Aid
- Abbot's Hill Supervision of Pupils Policy
- Abbot's Hill Prep School Assessment, Marking, Homework and Reporting Policy
- Mill Hill Education Group SEND Policy
- Abbot's Hill School Intimate Care Policy
- Abbot's Hill School RSE Policy
- Abbot's Hill PDE Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Mill Hill Education Group Retention of Records Policy
- Mill Hill Education Group Handling of Concerns and Complaints from Parents Policy

All policies can be found on the intranet under 'Organisation' and in the 'Policies' section of the school website.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (November 2024).

3. School Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

To foster a community in which all individuals are happy and inspired to live purposeful and fulfilling lives while remaining true to our founding values of strength and character.

Vision

A first choice school with outstanding environments in which to work, learn and play. We embrace diversity and provide an education fit for the modern world by challenging everyone in our community to be confident in who they are, develop strength of character and to become active, compassionate citizens who make significant and lasting contributions to others throughout their lives.

Values

We have developed our beliefs and behaviours as a whole community into a set of values and actions that guide our Prep and Senior Schools. Each year, these values are reviewed as a

collective community of children and staff to ensure that they reflect our ethos and vision.

4. The Learning and Development Requirements EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, November 2024 states, "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 of 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."

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Abbot's Hill, we cater for children from 6 months in our Nursery provision and children can move over to the school at the start of Reception. The final Nursery year includes sessions in our pre-reception class to prepare them for school life.

The following 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 with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn in at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

In line with the EYFS principles, at Abbot's Hill we:

- Provide quality and consistency across all Nursery and Reception classes
- Have a Key Person approach which develops close relationships with individual children
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment, indoors and out
- Provide a balanced curriculum
- Plan challenging and enjoyable learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation, assessment, and the child's interest
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are both adult-initiated and child-initiated
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context of a child's life and experiences
- Provide equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every pupil is included and supported.

Our philosophy is to provide a happy place for our children and team where each person feels supported and valued to learn and develop. We aim to provide a safe, nurturing environment where every child can achieve their full potential and be ready for the next step in their education. We strive to provide an enabling, inclusive and positive environment in which all children are championed to do their best.

Areas of learning and development:

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years' settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The three prime areas are particularly crucial for learning and forming relationships. They build a foundation for children to thrive and provide the basis for learning in all areas.

Prime Areas:

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

Support is also provided for children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

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

The above areas are underpinned by The Characteristics of effective teaching and Learning. In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately

Characteristics:

- Playing and exploring – showing curiosity and seeking challenge
- Active Learning – concentration and determination
- Creating and thinking critically – ideas and decision making

Using the important and inter-connected Prime and Specific Areas of learning from the statutory framework we plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of the children's needs, interests and stages of development.

5. Our Early Years Curriculum

'The EYFS is about what children learn, as well as how they learn. Effective practice is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning.' (Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, November 2024).

In the EYFS the Room leader, class teacher or practitioner ensures the child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. All pupils in Nursery are assigned a Key Person to support this. Parents will be given the name of their child's Key Person when they join Abbot's Hill.

Nursery has at least two staff assigned to a room at any one time. Ratios are maintained throughout the day as children arrive and leave at different times. Communication with the parents can be face-to-face, through phone calls, emails and via Tapestry (our online learning journal). This is primarily by the Key person but may be any member of the Nursery team depending on the situation.

In Reception, the teacher will be assisted by one teaching assistant, who is a qualified Early Years Practitioner. The class teacher will be responsible for communication with parents and is the key person for the children in that class.

In Nursery, planning is led by observation of the children's interests and developmental needs. This continues in our pre-school provision where this is further enhanced with themes and carefully planned adult-directed learning.

In Reception class, a thematic approach, tailored to the children, provides context for their learning. Children participate in whole class and small group teaching in phonics, literacy and maths, the former increasing as the pupils move through their Reception year, thus preparing them for the more formal environment of Year 1.

Specialist lessons for our pre-school children include Physical Education (PE), Music and French. In addition, Woodland School, Music, French and PE (including swimming) are delivered to our Reception children.

6. Observation and Assessment

We recognise that ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning of developmentally appropriate and sequenced activities to promote continuous progression. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Formative assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process at Abbot's Hill. It involves practitioners understanding children's interests, what they know and what they can do. In their interactions with children, our practitioners make and act on their own day-to-day observations about children's progress to inform

planning and next steps for individuals using guidance from Birth to 5 Matters, Development Matters and Early Learning Goals. All staff working in the early years are involved in this process.

Every member of the Early Years staff is aware of the need for confidentiality and privacy of information. As a child progresses through the EYFS the staff will make judgements based on their observations of the child in all seven areas of learning.

We ensure assessment opportunities do not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with pupils, nor require excessive paperwork. Observations (formative assessment) are recorded on the platform Tapestry. All parents/carers have a login to Tapestry, thus having the opportunity to access and view the digital learning journey as well as contribute their observations of learning and achievements captured at home.

When a child is **aged between 2 and 3**, staff review their progress and provide parents with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

Information on children's progress is shared with parents via:

- Tapestry (online learning journal) observations. Parents can also share learning from home.
- Parent consultation meetings – Autumn and Spring Term
- Ad-hoc meetings as required
- Reports home:
 - Rising Fours – End of the Summer term
 - Reception – end of the Autumn and Summer terms

Partnership

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with pupils and their families. Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make and encourage them to play an active part in their child's education both at home and at School. Working with other services and organisations is integral to our

practice, in order to meet the needs of our pupils. At times we may need to share information with other professionals, providing the best support possible.

More information about the EYFS can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

7. The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Please see Mill Hill Education Group **Safeguarding and Protecting the Welfare of Pupils Policy**

Children's safeguarding and welfare is paramount. We have a secure environment and stringent policies, procedures, and documents in place. We teach pupils how to be safe, make choices and assess risks.

We comply with the statutory framework and meet the associated regulatory requirements for Safeguarding and Welfare to:

- Promote the welfare of children
- Promote good health, including oral health
- Prevent 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 we maintain the correct pupil to adult ratios and that all staff are suitably qualified
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the school and to meet the needs of the children. We work with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Safeguarding Team to ensure this.
- Protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children.

Our recruitment process ensures that all staff recruited in the early years have been subject to the relevant checks, including a prohibition from teaching check (for teachers) and an enhanced criminal record check.

8. Pastoral

Our key person system and knowledge of our children ensure the best for every child to promote their overall wellbeing.

The Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy applies to the EYFS. Please see this policy for more details.

Under no circumstances is corporal punishment or the threat of physical punishment used in any capacity in the EYFS, or in any of the Group Schools.

9. Ratios

We ensure that pupils are adequately supervised and that children are always within sight

and hearing of staff. We meet the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (November 2024) with the following adult to child ratios:

	Reception	Nursery
Level 6/QTS	1:30	1:13
Instructor	1:30	1:13
Level 3-5	1:13 in the presence of a Level 6	1:8
Level 2	1:8, in the presence of a Level 3 or above	1:8, in the presence of a Level 3 or above
Unqualified in terms of EYFS	1:8 in the presence of a Level 3 or above	1:8 in the presence of a Level 3 or above

Children are usually within sight and hearing of staff members and always within sight or hearing. The only regular occasion where children may not be in sight is within Reception Woodland School where children are actively encouraged to develop both their independence and sense of responsibility within our woodland classrooms. The children are given clear guidelines about the ground rules for their Woodland School explorations and physical boundaries. All children are taught to present themselves to the teacher/leader when the signal is given. Alternative arrangements would be put in place for any child who it is deemed may struggle with these expectations.

After school activities:

Reception children attending after school clubs do so under the minimum requirement of their normal class ratios (1:30 but usually much less) and only where a suitably qualified member of staff or external coach is directly supervising/instructing.

Our after-school care club is open to children in Reception and operates on a 1:8 ratio due to the presence of Early Years children and the qualifications of the staff leading the care. Information about the nature of this provision is given in our parent handbook and at our information evenings

10. Mobile phones and cameras in the setting

Members of staff keep their phones away when the children are present. Personal cameras are not permitted in the setting and school camera equipment is used for the taking of any photographs (school iPads are used for observations of children).

Visitors to the school are not permitted to use mobile phones at all in the school buildings and are advised of this when signing into the school. Abbot's Hill staff and contractors may use their phones in the school office and staff rooms only away from children.

On school trips staff may only use their mobile phones in case of an emergency or to communicate amongst staff if groups have been separated.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photos or videos. Further guidance is provided in the Safeguarding Policy.

11. Paediatric First Aid

Most EYFS staff hold a recognised Paediatric First Aid certificate, following stipulations noted in Annex A of the statutory framework. The School therefore meets the regulation that new staff qualifying post 30 June 2016 and working with EYFS children

are trained in Paediatric First Aid within three months of starting work.

Certificates

The School ensures that at least one person with the aforementioned certificate is on the premises and is available at all times. Paediatric First Aid training is renewed every three years.

12. Health/Medicines

Parents are notified of the location on MSP (My School Portal) of the relevant medical forms during the acceptance process, this ensures relevant medical information is shared to promote the good health of pupils at Abbot's Hill. Please see our First Aid and Combined Medical Policy for further information. The detail within this policy, including the procedure for responding to children who are ill or infectious, is shared with parents at the information evening for new parents and in the parent handbook on MSP. Prescription medicines must not be administered unless prescribed by a UK doctor, dentist, nurse (if they are a prescribing nurse) or pharmacist (and medicines containing aspirin must have been prescribed by a doctor).

All accidents and first aid treatment are recorded and communicated to parents as soon as possible or appropriate.

Intimate Care

Please see the Intimate Care and Toileting Policy.

13. Disqualification from Childcare

All staff working with children aged 8 and under in out of School care, and all those working with pupils in the EYFS complete the declaration on disqualification from childcare.

14. Security and suitability of premises

The security and safety of the children at Abbot's Hill are paramount. We have considered the security guidelines to schools issued by the DFE (Department for Education) and undertaken regular periodic internal reviews. This ensures that the children also feel safe and secure within their learning environment.

The school is always secure, with doors always closed and locked (with confidential combinations and facial recognition in Nursery). See Supervision policy for more information. Children are only released into the care of individuals who have been notified to us by the parent/carer.

Insurance

The EYFS is covered under the school public liability insurance.

15. Risk Assessments

We ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure staff and pupils are not exposed to risks. Rigorous daily checks and enhanced cleaning procedures are in place. Risk assessments informing staff practice and management of risk are available on request. Risk assessments for outings must be conducted, though not necessarily in writing. These should take account of adult to child ratios and the steps taken to remove, minimise and manage identified risks and hazards. Separate risk assessments are carried out for educational outings. We follow different ratios for educational outings, these are outlined in the ***Educational Visits Policy***.

16. Staff supervision

EYFS staff receive termly supervision which provides support, coaching and training and promotes the interests of pupils. Supervision fosters a culture of mutual support, teamwork, and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues. It also provides further opportunities for staff to discuss any issues particularly concerning pupil development or well-being. Please see **Appraisal and CPD Policy**. Staff records are kept confidential.

Staff Medication

Staff members must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children., If a practitioner is taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, they should seek medical advice. Practitioners must only work directly with children if the medical advice received confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that person's ability to look after children properly. All medication on the premises must be stored securely, and out of reach of children, at all times.

17. Staff Induction

All new members of staff receive a full induction that includes:

- Help in understanding roles and responsibilities, including supervision duties
- Information about emergency evacuation procedures
- Procedures, responsibilities and expectations for safeguarding and child protection
- Information on school, and Group policies, including the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety information, procedures, and issues
- Curriculum familiarisation

Alongside this member of staff are provided with a detailed staff handbook.

18. Food and drink

Food provided by the school kitchen is healthy, balanced and nutritious. Before a child is admitted to the setting, we will obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements.

All Nursery children who have any allergies or dietary requirements will have their meals and snacks on red plates and bowls. Their meals will be served onto their plate or bowl in the kitchen, covered and labelled with their name.

Children who have a dietary requirement will be served their meals first. One member of staff (the Room Leader/most senior Level 3) will be responsible for handing out the red plates/bowls. Meals should be uncovered by this member of staff and any queries about the food should be directed straight to the Nursery Cook.

If in doubt, food should not be given to the child until confirmation of its suitability is received.

All Reception children with a dietary need are known to the Catering staff in the Main Dining room and they are only served food that meets their dietary requirements.

Reception children are accompanied by Pre-Prep staff to lunch. Fresh drinking water will be available and accessible at all times.

Children will be provided with utensils that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners. Meals times will be used to help pupils develop independence, through making food choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.

Children will be discouraged from sharing or swapping their food with other pupils. Feedback is provided to parents at pick up about how they have eaten for the younger children or for those this is an ongoing concern.

19. Complaints

Complaints procedures are explained in ***MHEG Handling of Concerns and Complaints*** which is available for parents to view on the Group and School website.

20. Review

This Review: March 2025

Next Review: March 2026

This policy has been reviewed and authorised by the Executive Team on 12th March 2025.

Appendix A: Early Years Topic Cycles

The whole school works around the same topic which is changed termly with a different focus for each year group. Children in Early Years will be given the opportunity to explore the topic by addressing their own questions and interests. The topics will change each year to ensure the children experience a range of topics throughout their time at Abbot's Hill enhancing their sense of excitement and exploration.

Appendix B: Contacting ISI And Ofsted

Contacting ISI - If you are unhappy with the school's initial response to your complaint ISI can be contacted by writing to: concerns@isi.net or by phone 020 7600 0100. The DFE can also be contacted on 0370 000 2288.

Contacting OFSTED - Ofsted – the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills – brings together the wide experience of four formerly separate inspectorates. It inspects and regulates care for children and young people and inspects education and training for learners of all ages.

To call OFSTED

- 0300 123 1231 for general enquiries
- 0300 123 4666 if you want to make a complaint or have a concern about any service Ofsted inspects or regulates (08.00 to 18.00)

To contact OFSTED by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

For complaints - CIE@ofsted.gov.uk

Appendix C: Glossary Of Acronyms and Abbreviations in Order of Appearance in the Policy

EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage

ISI – Independent Schools Inspectorate

KCSIE – Keeping Children Safe In Education

DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead

DDSL – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

KS1 - Key Stage 1

SEN – Special Educational Needs

EAL – English as an Additional Language

DFE – Department For Education

SENCo – Special Educational Needs Coordinator