

POLICY: Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

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Member of staff responsible for the policy:	Lauren Clark
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Introduction

‘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.’

EYFS Framework

Aims

At Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service (GHES) we aim to:

- provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning
- create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent
- value the individual child and work alongside parents, carers and their main school teachers to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential
- ensure every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Principles

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to end of Reception year. We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings;

- 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.

- We recognise the importance of all areas of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. Our practice is informed by the EYFS framework and covers the education and care of all children in EYFS, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.



Areas of Teaching and Learning

There are 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) relating to 7 areas of development, of which 3 are the “prime areas” and 4 “specific areas”. All the 7 areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Prime areas	Specific areas
<p>These are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>The three prime areas are strengthened and applied through these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

The EYFS Curriculum and Planning

Many EYFS children receive education from both the Outpatient Team and GRH School Room whilst they are with GHES. This is usually because they have long term illnesses that requires regular hospital treatment, such as cancer. Teachers working with EYFS children, take individual schools’ planning into account, alongside the main areas of the EYFS curriculum set out above to ensure continuity of education and close partnership working between home, hospital and school.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development. We respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

The EYFS framework also highlights critical **characteristics of effective teaching and learning**:

- **Playing and exploring**- children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.
- **Active learning**- children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

The context of sessions at GHES means the child is able to have up to an hour of bespoke learning delivered through hands on active learning and a play based approach. This is cross curricular and appropriately paced to ensure children are engaged and able to achieve to the best of their ability. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities throughout the Foundation Year.

In GRH, short term EYFS patients may access the Schoolroom for just one session or part of a day. For these short-term children their interests and ideas are the key drivers for lessons. The aim is to motivate and inspire the children whilst they are unwell and in hospital.

Phonics

At GHES we follow the ELS phonics scheme when delivering online group phonics and face to face. Phonics is planned using a Now/Next/After approach (in line with whole service practice) and prioritised in each and every session that any EYFS child has (see separate planning sheet for phonics sessions).

Writing

In line with the Primary Writing Framework, our approach to early writing prioritises spoken language, teaching of transcription skills such as handwriting and spelling, and sentence-level work. We focus on oral composition and sentence rehearsal before writing, ensuring children develop vocabulary and fluency. Writing tasks emphasise accuracy and well-structured sentences rather than length. Our lessons are carefully sequenced to reduce cognitive load and promote automaticity, creating a positive writing culture supported by ongoing staff training.

Assessment

When GHES have EYFS children, part of our daily practice is to observe and assess children’s development and learning, to inform our future plans. Consideration is given to the most effective ways to support the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development and this is integral to planning next steps which identify the needs and interests of the child. Significant observations of children’s achievements are collated and shared on Showbie. Outreach and GRH teams share the Showbie EYFS classroom, to ensure that all teachers across GHES are informed of the ongoing learning and can offer the development required for shared children.

At the end of the Foundation year, all schools complete an EYFS profile for children. The main school are responsible for completing the reception baseline assessment (RBA) and end-of-year EYFS profile in which they assess whether a pupil is ‘emerging’, ‘expected’ or ‘exceeding’ in relation to the Early Learning Goals. A report demonstrating progress for each pupil is shared with schools and the profile is completed collaboratively, where appropriate, if children are still with GHES at the end of an academic year.

Children are defined as having reached a good level of development at the end of the EYFS if they have achieved at least the expected level in:

- The early learning goals in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language) and
- The early learning goals in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

Safety, child protection and safeguarding

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety, including Prevent and CSE. Please refer to **GHEs Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures for more detail**. We promote good health through our PSHE/Wellbeing lessons and the general philosophy of GHEs.

Staff have regard to the government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023' and to the government's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024'.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that the majority of schools report that on return to full time education, children are in line with expectations for their age. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents / carers, play therapists and other agencies.

Parents as Partners and the Wider context

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We create and maintain partnership with parents and carers and recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care. Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by inviting members of the community into our setting as appropriate. At the GRH School Room we have a range of visitors including a storyteller and a music therapist as well as a yoga teacher.

Transitions

If requested, GHEs staff support the child's main school in the transition from Reception to Year 1.



When children are well enough to return to school, GHES works closely with the main school to support a smooth transition.

Intimate Care Policy

“Intimate” care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. In the hospital setting it is generally the medical staff that carry out this care if the child is unable to do this independently. (GRH School Room have an Intimate Care Policy which should be read in connection with EYFS Policy). For the Outreach team all intimate care is the responsibility of the parents who must be present if tuition is taking place. Please read the GHES home visits policy and parent/carer education at home – expectations document for full details (provided to parents on induction).

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

GHES child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures

GHES home visits policy

GHES education at home document

GHES GRH intimate care policy and intimate care plan guidance

Key Reference documents for EYFS teachers and leaders:

- Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school based providers. (DfE, 2024)
- Development Matters in Early Years. (DfE, 2023)
- Early Years foundation stage profile handbook. (DfE, 2023)
- Early Years inspection handbook (Ofsted, 2024)
- Best start in life: a research review for early years. A three-part subject-based curriculum research review focused on early years education. (Ofsted, 2024)
- The writing framework, (DFE, 2025)

