



WALTHAMSTOW HALL
SEVENOAKS

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

At Walthamstow Hall, our philosophy is to value every child as a unique individual, who enjoys learning and thinking for herself. We believe that every child should be happy, secure, valued and confident. We provide a supportive and secure environment in which every child can flourish and learn at their own pace and in their own individual way. Our role is to stimulate and encourage their development and enjoyment of learning through a variety of different activities in secure indoor and outdoor situations, through play and through structured and creative activities. We encourage the growth of social skills and empathy amongst the children. The relationships which the children develop with each other and with our staff are central to their happiness and lay the best possible foundation for their future. We value communication with parents as we work together with them in providing an environment in which their daughter can learn and develop.

In drawing up this policy guidance has been sought from the following documents:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2017
- ISI Inspection Framework, September 2019
- A Guide to the Law for School Governors, April 2009
- General Inspection Queries, but with particular reference to EYFS, Independent School Association (ISA) guidance an ISBA Briefing Document, February 2009
- A Checklist of Policies for Schools – by Farrer and Co an ISBA Briefing Paper, 2004

This policy should be read in conjunction with our related policies:

- Risk Assessments for Early Years Outings
- Policy for Educational Visits for EYFS Children
- Missing Child Policy
- Sun Protection Policy
- Policy for Administering Medicines

WALTHAMSTOW HALL SCHOOL

Walthamstow Hall is a school that caters for children from the beginning of the school term that they become 3 years of age. All of the children who enter our Early Years are part of our School community. The Junior School Leadership Team will extend a warm welcome when you visit and will show you our facilities. They will be pleased to answer any of your questions, either about our Early Years, or about the rest of the school. We send parents and prospective parents copies of the school's prospectus on request. Details of the school's address, location

and contact details, together with a list of staff and Governors, as well as a great deal of information about the aims and ethos of the whole school is given. The curriculum and activities for our older children is explained in some detail. A great deal of further information about the school is available on our website, including a list of the whole school's policies, including those that apply specifically to the Early Years. All parents, including Early Years parents, are given copies of the School Information Booklet and the Junior School Parents' Handbook.

As an integral part of the school, the Early Years children make full use of the Junior School's facilities, such as the Hall and Medical Room although they have separate classrooms and outdoor play areas of their own. Children in Early Years also benefit from using the School's swimming pool on the Senior School site. We expect them to remain pupils in our Junior School until they reach the age of 11. A place in the Senior School is by selection; but all pupils from our Junior School will automatically be considered for selection to the Senior School.

Walthamstow Hall is registered with the DfE as an Early Years provider.

ADMISSIONS

Children may join us from the term in which they become 3 years of age.

For full admissions information please see the whole School's Admissions Policy which applies to the Early Years as much as to the rest of the school. It appears on our web-site.

Equal Opportunities Policy

We welcome children from a diverse range of backgrounds and pride ourselves on being an inclusive community where there is complete equality of opportunity and everyone is valued for being themselves. Copies of the school's Equal Opportunities Policy are on our web-site and can be sent to parents on request. We welcome all children and are happy to discuss their individual needs with you. Walthamstow Hall adheres to the Government's SEN Code of Practice.

PUPIL NUMBERS AND OUR DAILY ROUTINE

At Walthamstow Hall we have a mixed Early Years class for children between the ages of 3 and 5. The children join together for many activities, whilst also separating into two or more groups for more focussed age-appropriate tasks. Early Years 1 is the name given to the children between 3 years of age and official school age. Early Years 2 is commonly known as 'Reception' year and is the first year of formal full time schooling.

Children in Early Years 2 attend full time, whereas the Early Years 1 week comprises of ten sessions; 5 mornings and 5 afternoons.. The numbers of children attending each session varies according to their choice of day (we recommend at least two sessions a week). In both Early Years groups there are teachers supported by a team of highly experienced Classroom Assistants. . Lucy Ireland.

Within our Creative Curriculum we introduce different topics which the children explore through a variety of mediums, including; books, art, clay, drama, music, computing, crafts and model making. We introduce the Read, Write Inc Phonics programme in an informal manner for those in Early Years 1, then in daily structured lessons for those in Early Years 2. In Early Years 1, Literacy teaching is mainly based around stories related to the current

Creative Curriculum topic, with an additional focus on name writing and simple reading and writing games. In Early Years 2, the children enjoy daily Literacy lessons focussed on enhancing their reading and writing techniques. Mathematics is first introduced through practical activities such as counting games, weighing activities and measuring, which is then built upon in more formal daily lessons in Early Years 2. All Early Years children are encouraged to participate in Music, Ballet, PE and French. Those in Early Years 2 also benefit from weekly Computing and Swimming lessons. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the children are enthusiastic and confident learners, who are ready for the more structured environment of Year 1.

For more information on the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, please refer to the Department for Education website.

The Annual Information Meeting

All parents of children in Early Years are invited to an Early Years Information Session, whether actual or virtual, in the Summer Term with the Head of Pre-Prep and Early Years Leader. The aims of the year's curriculum, the topics that will be taught and the methods of delivering the curriculum through the Creative Curriculum - play, structured activities and outdoor activities - will be briefly explained along with the routines and expectations of an Early Years' day.

Contact Book and Newsletters

Children in Early Years 2 are given a contact book which is used for communication between teachers and parents. Weekly newsletters and regular parent information letters are given out to all children in Early Years.. This, along with daily contact at drop-off and collection times is an important method of communication between parents and the school. If you would like to speak to any of us about your daughter for longer than a quick chat at the end of a day please either leave a message in the School Office for the teacher to call you or make an appointment. Every child in Early Years has an online Tapestry account which can be added to by parents as well as teachers. This is used to track the children's individual progress, inform parents of developmental milestones, as well as a general communication tool. At the end of their time in Early Years, the children will be presented with a copy of their Tapestry journal as a lovely momento of their time in Early Years.

Early Years 2 children will bring some reading books, phonics work, mathematics activities, or word cards home each day.

Assemblies

From Autumn Term, Early Years 2 children join us for whole School assemblies. The Early Years 1 pupils join us occasionally. Assemblies are broadly Christian but are designed to be respectful of other faiths too. Assemblies provide an excellent public setting in which to commend children for special work, acts of kindness or helpfulness, and to reward them with merit badges, special certificates etc.

Outdoor Learning

All of the children are encouraged to play in their secure outdoor space during morning and afternoon breaks. We also use the outdoor space for supervised activities, involving playing with water, sand and some ball games. Children are encouraged to plant and grow their own seeds. The school has secure grounds and children are regularly taken in supervised groups inside the school grounds to learn about the seasons of the year, by collecting Autumn leaves, observing seasonal changes, recognising animals and birds etc.

Regular Forest School sessions will supplement our outdoor learning; Forest School is part of the Pre-Prep Wellbeing programme that also includes Mindfulness, Ecological Awareness and Yoga.

Visits

We organise a variety of excursions. These are designed to help the children to acquire a basic understanding of our traditions, of the natural world and of the importance of other cultures. Your daughter's school calendar lists the major visits that are due to take place over the coming term. We require signed consent forms each time, for even the shortest visits. We will send you a letter well in advance, telling you about every visit and, if appropriate, its cost. Occasionally our learning includes short walks within and slightly beyond the school grounds (e.g. picking blackberries in Linden Chase). For these occasions we ask you to sign a 'blanket' permission slip, because such walks may be spontaneous and dependent on weather. Copies of our policy on visits for EYFS children are on our web-site, www.walthamstow-hall.co.uk

Behaviour

Even the youngest children are encouraged to behave with kindness and consideration towards each other. They learn to look after their own possessions and to respect other's possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity.

We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions. Very occasionally, a child may see the Head of Pre-Prep, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action; but such instances are *extremely* rare! Parents are always informed when any sanction or reproof is needed, and in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, they would be invited into the school to discuss the situation with their child's teacher to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty. The Head of Pre-Prep is responsible for the overall behaviour management in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

FOOD AND DRINK

In the EYFS the pupils are used to a routine of washing their hands before and after eating their break time snacks and lunch. They are taught how to carefully and thoroughly wash their hands. The development of good hygiene is reinforced through regular reminders from staff and through posters (text and pictures) in the EYFS classroom environment.

Children in Early Years are offered a piece of fruit and another snack (e.g. bread stick, flapjack) and a drink of either water or milk at morning break. Drinking water is available throughout the day, as we fully recognise the importance of proper hydration.

The Early Years 2 children along with those Early Years 1 who are staying for lunch, eat lunch with their teachers and Classroom Assistants in the Dining Hall at midday before the other children in the Junior School. The children are served their meal, with an adult sitting at the head of each of the tables.

Weekly menus are put onto our website and in our weekly Newsletter at the start of term. We offer a wide choice of hot and cold food, with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and salads. We offer our pupils a widely varied, healthy and tasty diet. We also attempt to cater for all tastes and preferences, including vegetarian. All meals are freshly prepared in our own kitchens by our chef, and her team.

Parents are asked not to send food or drink to School with their child.

Special Diets

We aim to be a nut-free, egg-free and sesame seed-free school. Parents of children who have allergies to any food product, or who have special dietary requirements, are asked to make this clear in the medical questionnaire. They should inform the school at once if their daughter subsequently develops an intolerance of any food. The School Nurse, the Head of Pre-Prep and the Chef in Charge are happy to see any parent who has concerns about their daughter's medical condition, and to devise a special menu, where practically possible.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

We appreciate that sending your child to Early Years is a big step and it is understandable that some parents may worry or feel anxious about their child's well-being and happiness. That is why we invite you and your child to spend a short 'taster' session in the Early Years' class before your child joins us. Once your daughter has joined us, you are always welcome to visit the school.

When your child begins Early Years, they will be assigned a 'Key Person'. Your child's Form Teacher is her 'Key Person'. The Key Person's role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The Key Person will also help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship with the child and build a relationship with parents.

Your child's Form Teacher is responsible for your child's pastoral care and, with our small classes, quickly gets to know every individual child extremely well. You will see the Form Teacher twice a day when you drop off and collect your child, and any worries can be swiftly resolved by an informal chat. Otherwise, you are welcome to make an appointment for a

longer (or more private) conversation with the Form Teacher, or with the Head of Pre-Prep. Any concerns will always be treated in complete confidence.

We have a weekly newsletter for parents, published on our school website or available in hard copy from the School Office. It is full of news about what has been happening in School, activities and outings as well as reminders about future events. Early Years also have their own weekly newsletter.

There will be an opportunity to meet the Headmistress informally once each term. She frequently attends formal events to which we send invitations to parents. We very much hope to see you at:

- The Harvest Festival
- Nativity and Christingle Service
- Sports Day
- Termly celebration events

....as well as many others.

Parent Consultations

We start each academic year with an informal opportunity in an evening to meet your daughter's teachers and Classroom Assistants .

We hold Parent Consultations at the end of each term at which parents have the opportunity to talk to their child's teachers about her progress.

Reports

Children are assessed throughout their time in Early Years through observations, questioning and guiding using the development statements from 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' (2017) in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile in Reception (EYFSP) at the end of their time in Early Years. If a child starts Early Years under the age of three and the Statutory Progress Check has not been done elsewhere, it will be completed before her third birthday in conjunction with her parents.

Written reports for Early Years 2 children are prepared and sent to parents at the end of both Autumn Term and Summer Term. Early Years 1 children will receive a written report at the end of the academic year.

EYFS Profile

At the end of June in Early Years 2, the EYFS Profile is completed for each pupil. Each pupil's level of development is assessed against seventeen 'Early Learning Goals' which have been determined by the government. Assessment will indicate whether pupils are emerging, expected or exceeding when judged against the stated levels of development. The profile reflects ongoing observation, relevant record, contributions and discussions with parents and carers that have been collated throughout the EYFS years. At the end of the academic year for Early Years 2 children, the Form Teacher provides the EYFS Profile to the Year 1 Form Teacher when meeting to discuss each individual pupil in the form.

Storage of Records

We store all of our records on pupils in locked cabinets. Parents may arrange to see the records of their children in accordance with the whole School's policy on Reports and Record Keeping (which is on our website and can be sent to you on request). You have the right to make written comments on your child's records, which will then be treated as part of that record. The School is registered under the Data Protection Act and complies with its provisions for example, about the disclosure of information relating to third parties.

COMPLAINTS & CONCERNS

We hope that you will not feel the need to complain and that any concern can be sensitively and efficiently handled before it reaches that stage. However, the School's Complaints and Concerns Procedure (which apply equally to the Early Years) is on our website. We will send you copies on request. We aim to investigate all complaints and notify you of the outcome of investigation within 28 days. We maintain records of complaints for three years after your child has left our School.

CHILD PROTECTION

The School's Child Protection policies, including its policy for the safer recruitment of staff, are enforced rigorously in the Early Years. Copies of the policies, which apply throughout the School, are on our website [and can be sent to parents on request].

MEDICAL MATTERS

Please keep your child at home if they are ill or infectious, and phone us on the first day of illness. An ill child will not be happy in School, and will only infect others. We will therefore telephone you and ask you to collect your child if they become ill during the day. We ask that children are kept at home for at least 24 and up to 48 hours after they have suffered vomiting and/or diarrhoea. Please refer to the First Aid Policy for Parents.

The Early Years class, like the rest of the School, have access to our Medical Room which is led by the School Nurse, and other qualified First Aiders on the staff. They are responsible for any medical care or First Aid that your child may require during the School day, or at other times when the School is open. A First Aid box is located in the Early Years' Department and classroom, and is checked and, if necessary, replenished every week. All our Early Years staff hold the Paediatric First Aid qualification. For further details and a full list of qualified staff, please consult the First Aid Policy Staff Guidance (including suspected Covid-19 symptoms).

We will *always* contact you immediately if your child suffers anything more than a trivial injury, or if she becomes unwell during the School day, or if we have any worries or concerns about her health. We will ask you to collect your child if she becomes ill during the School day. We will inform you if they have a minor accident or graze at School and ask you to sign the accident form if any First Aid has been necessary.

Teachers and Classroom Assistants requiring the need to take medication themselves seek medical advice before entering the EYFS classroom environment.

Medical Care

Although your daughter will normally receive medical care from your family GP practice, we hold medical information on all our pupils in order to ensure that we can provide appropriately for their needs, or look after them if they are injured or have an accident. We would therefore be grateful if you would complete and return the Medical Questionnaire before she joins the school. For further detail, please refer to the First Aid Policy Staff Guidance.

Please remember that we need your written consent for every medicine before we are allowed to give it to your child.

Children with Medical Needs or Special Education Needs who require special adjustments

If your child has medical needs, special education needs or requires any special adjustments, we will invite you to a meeting with the Early Years Form Teacher, the School Nurse and the Head of Pre-Prep and any outside Specialist who has been involved with the care of your child, to discuss thoroughly the regime that is most appropriate for her individual care, well before she joins our school.

Medical Records

All medical records will be stored in the Medical Centre until your daughter's 25th birthday, in accordance with our Records Retention and Storage Policy. Access to these records is restricted to the Medical Staff.

MAINTAINING A SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT

The safety of the children is our highest priority, and because they are so young, we need to be particularly vigilant.

- Arrangements for handing over children to their parents at the end of the day/session: The teachers and Classroom Assistants personally hand over your child at the end of the day/session. They will only allow your child to go home with you, unless we have received your advance permission (preferably in writing) that she may be collected by another adult.
- The teachers and Classroom Assistants will never allow a child to leave the premises unsupervised. There are always at least two adults in charge of the outside play area.
- Children are fully supervised at all times while they are in School by qualified staff.
- All our staff are qualified to the appropriate level to enable them to supervise and teach your daughter effectively.
- Ask all visitors to identify themselves to the School Office and to state their business before we give them access to the premises. Visitors sign in, wear security badges and are escorted throughout their visit. They sign out on leaving.
- The staff will register all pupils at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- The Early Years Department and classroom may only be opened by a key pad (known only to School staff). The grounds are secured during the school day. The main gate at the front of the School is electronic and may be opened by School Office staff once visitors have identified themselves via the intercom. The pedestrian gate has a key pad

and the code is only made available to staff and parents. The back gate remains closed throughout the school day.

The entrance to our building leads to our School Office. All visitors will be asked to wait there until they have signed in and their escort has arrived. The security locks make it impossible for visitors to enter via another door until this process has been completed. Each child is handed over by the teacher to her parent or carer.

Missing Child Policy

Our Missing Child Policy and Procedures When a Child is Not Collected on Time are on our website, www.walthamstow-hall.co.uk

HEALTH AND SAFETY

We update and review our risk assessments on the Early Years' Department and classroom and other indoor areas, the outdoor play space and all the equipment and toys used by the children every year in order to ensure that everything with which your child may come into contact has been assessed and potential hazards are kept to a minimum. We welcome your comments and suggestions for improvement.

This policy has regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Walthamstow Hall policies are approved, ratified and reviewed regularly by the Governing Body in the light of statutory requirements.

Reviewed June 2020
Next Review Date June 2021

Signed:Date:

Mrs J Adams
Chairman of the Governing Body