



# **LITTLE ELLIES**

## **Early Years Policy**

<b>Policy Creation &amp; Review</b>	
<b>Author(s)</b>	Manager
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## Our Vision:

At Little Ellies we believe that children who begin their education in a learning environment that is vibrant, purposeful, challenging and supportive, stand the best chance of developing into confident and successful learners. This goes hand in hand with our vision '**Learning to Grow and Succeed Together**'.

## Aims:

This policy aims to ensure:

- All pupils whatever their race, gender, age or ability, feel valued and supported to achieve their best and can access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- We promote positive learning behaviors and attitudes and create a safe and effective learning environment, where all children and staff promote and demonstrate the British Values through characteristics of effective teaching and learning and show a mutual respect for one another.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress from their starting points, no child gets left behind and all children reach high standards of attainment.
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers to raise standards of the quality of education and promote a healthy home school partnership.

That staff at Little Ellies work in partnership with our parents, and we believe this is of the utmost importance. Together, we can meet your child's individual needs and give your child the best start in life. This will enable all children to be confident, independent learners and achieve their full potential.

## Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2025 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and supported and guided by the newly revised Development Matters September 2023.

The statutory framework clearly sets out the parameters of expectations and this is used as our long term curriculum planning.

We also work with all new guidance documents that are released by the DfE to support learning and teaching and any toolkits/audits released to provide a holistic approach to the Early Years and identify areas for development.

## Introduction to the structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to all children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. At Little Ellies we are a Private Day Nursery which is open 51 weeks per year. We take children as young as 6 months; and children can stay with us up until the term they are 5 years old (by legal requirement). We take both part time and full time children with some being funded and others being payers. We have different structures regarding times, which include funded 15 hours for two year olds spread over 3 hours a day, or a varied timetable funded 30 hours children that can range from 3 full days to 9am to 3pm term time only. We also operate 8am-6pm for our full time paying children. Some children stay with us from the baby room up until the preschool room, and usually leave us for Reception the September following their 4th birthday. Please refer to our Admissions Policy to see how we allocate children's spaces. Little Ellies give parents guidance and information on how to apply for a Reception place early in the Autumn term.

At Little Ellies we have:

- ❑ Two rooms in the building; consisting of class 2 and class 3.
- ❑ Class 2's floor space is divided between our babies (6 months - 2 years) and our toddlers (2 years - 3 years). The ratio for babies is 3 babies to 1 adult and the ratio for our toddler room is 5 toddlers to 1 adult.
- ❑ Class 3 caters for our preschoolers (3 years - 5 years) and has the ratio of 8 preschoolers to 1 adult.
- ❑ Staff that are all childcare Level 3 qualified and above, which also include three Level 3 qualified SENCOs.
- ❑ All areas have continual access to the outdoor learning environment.
- ❑ The leadership and management duties of the EYFS are carried out by the Nursery Manager and the Deputy Manager
- ❑ We have professional engagement with the Beckton and Royal Docks Children's Centre to support our families whom we share the site with.

The EYFS is based upon four fundamental principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

## **A Unique Child**

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

At Little Ellies we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in different ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebrations of work and achievements to encourage children to have a positive attitude to learning. We want to develop an 'I can do it' attitude in all children.

Inclusion - We value the diversity of individuals within the nursery and believe that every child matters. All children at Little Ellies are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or ability. All families are valued within our nursery. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations matched to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage.

We do this through:

- ❑ Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests developing their self-esteem and confidence;
- ❑ Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- ❑ Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- ❑ Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;

- ❑ Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- ❑ Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- ❑ Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.
- ❑ Working closely with parents, carers and other professionals and outside agencies to enhance the lives of children who may require additional support.

## Positive Relationships

***“Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;”***

At Little Ellies we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners - We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most educators in the home and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played and their future role in educating the children.

We do this through:

- ❑ Talking to parents/carers about their children, before the child starts nursery, through inviting the parents and children to our stay and play sessions.
- ❑ Providing information about the nursery and what to expect in the EYFS.
- ❑ Encouraging parents to talk to the staff and management generally if there are any concerns, and regularly reminding parents which adults they can talk to.
- ❑ Providing a written report i.e. transition report / 2 year old progress check on the child's progress throughout their time at Little Ellies.
- ❑ Inviting Little Ellies parents to a 'Stay and Play' session three times a year where the adults working with their child will talk about the progress they have made.
- ❑ Inviting Little Ellies parents throughout the year to promote communication, vocabulary and language development through storytelling, role play and puppet making. This also gives us an opportunity to promote the parent's voice in order to demonstrate how they can support their child's learning at home.
- ❑ Communicating with parents to report on the child's development, daily comments, and behaviour as well as through parents evenings, three times a year.

All staff at Little Ellies aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our nursery all children are assigned to a key person once they start the setting.

## Enabling Environments

***“Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;”***

At Little Ellies we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. The environment is planned to ensure all areas are used to enable learning for every child. The children have the choice of where they choose to learn. All activities are based upon current assessment

and all have a main learning intention that can be accessed with and without adult support. Our basic provision is linked to the age related expectations of each cohort. We encourage child initiated activities and adapt our continuous provision accordingly. We enhance our provision through objects/resources, prompts, conversation and questioning.

## Our Curriculum

Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2025 statutory framework of the EYFS.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected.

### The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

### The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

### Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is through the characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

We offer a high quality broad and balanced curriculum which has four main elements:

Teaching and Learning developed from a BIG QUESTION and follows through on children's interest	Teaching is introduced via a 'book of the month' concept. Core, meaningful books are used to elicit curiosity and questioning. All aspects of our curriculum require practitioners to be flexible and take account of children's interests and develop them further through a balanced adult-initiated experience (guided learning) and child-initiated experience.
A sequence of learning	This is initiated through core books, rhymes and songs. Books and language development is a running theme through the curriculum. We enhance each area of development within a vocabulary rich environment. For example, our cycle of 'Core Books' begins with very

	<p>simple, repetitive texts. Over time, children progress onto texts with more complex vocabulary and structures. Learning is built on progressive skills through the week and this is also dependent on how well children understand concepts. Repetition is at the core of practice to ensure learning sticks long term.</p>
<p>Developing and enhancing learning through core experiences</p>	<p>Developing children's interests through real experiences such as visiting the supermarket and local parks. Emulating experiences by providing a well planned environment through a Forest School learning approach. Introducing children to new concepts and ideas that they may not have encountered and adding to their cultural capital.</p>
<p>Deepening and extending learning</p>	<p>Parent involvement is crucial. We learn a great deal about each child from their parents. Parental support and a high quality home learning environment make a huge difference to children. Parents have the opportunity to participate in workshops and in class learning, to facilitate learning that imbibes the familiarity of home and bring it to the classroom. These might be in the form of storytelling in multilingual languages and adults interacting with children in many different languages. This is particularly important for children with English as an additional language.</p> <p>Where children move on quickly, our emphasis is on deepening their understanding rather than introducing new skills or concepts.</p>

## Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively making learning memorable. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to initially focus strongly on the 3 prime areas in Nursery whilst also providing varied experiences in all other areas of development.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. 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 and use effective interactive teaching methods on an individual basis.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

The planning within the EYFS includes:

- Long term plans and short term continuous provision plans.

These plans are evaluated weekly and reviewed annually. They are changed to suit the cohort and meet the needs and interests of the children. Practitioners annotate when required to highlight changes or extensions.

- Long term plans are guided by Development Matters 2023 and are adapted for the correct ages and stages by leaders and practitioners.
- Planning leads on from a Core Book each month in which to guide the learning. There is also detailed planning for the Continuous Provision areas in the classrooms. (Sand, water, dough, mark making/ writing, mathematics, construction, small world and the workshop area)

- ❑ Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.
- ❑ Practitioners use the model of 'teaching in the moment' as they interact with children, using high quality questioning when playing alongside children. They use the SHREC approach to develop conversational dialogue and back and forth interactions. This offers the adults an opportunity to move a child's skill and knowledge on in that moment to expand on their learning and this is recorded as a next step.

We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We endeavour the children to experience concepts and ideas and ensure we make them as real and as memorable as possible. The activities offer opportunities for extended learning and are structured to develop their learning. Planning takes into account children with individual needs in line with the SEND policy.

## SEND Provision

At Little Ellies our SEND Policy outlines how we develop and further opportunities to enhance the skills of our pupils with additional needs. Through high quality resources and practice, children are provided opportunities of exploring and deepening their skills both within the classroom and through the provision of specific projects and activities. We work in partnership with parents, Health Visitors, Area SENCos, Speech and Language Teams and the children's centre to meet the children's needs and support plans are reviewed regularly through the year. *See SEND policy.*

## Assessment

On-going formative assessment is at the heart of our effective early years practice. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. The capture of evidence through observations and Busy Books outcomes forms the EYFSP (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile) which summarises pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals alongside Teacher judgement.

Our aim is for the system to be proportionate, and to ensure it is not overly burdensome.

Assessment in the EYFS is in the form of:

- Photo/video observations on our digital app Evidence Me. This is also shared with parents and parents also feed into the app with learning that takes place at home.
- Baseline Settling In observations are done in the first 5 days of the child's entry into the Nursery. This allows Key People to spend quality time getting to know their key children and their families.
- We use our own tracking system to capture our summative data and this occurs 4 times a year. Checking that individual children, and groups of children, are making progress and taking prompt action where this is not the case
- Practitioners are supported through the year to reflect on baseline observations and On Entry assessments and thereafter keep track of all children through pupil progress meetings with the Manager as part of Supervisions. Children who may require additional support are recorded on to an action plan as part of the staff members supervision. It is the responsibility of practitioners to ensure all children's learning is monitored via the coverage tracker and all gaps are closed through supportive interventions.
- Dialogue with parents: All targets are shared with parents at the first Parent's Evening. Thereafter, 2 more Parents Evening are conducted in the year to support children's attainment and next steps. Practitioners will refer to the checkpoints in Development Matters, checking children's development against these.
- Dialogue with children, focused on how they learn, to promote metacognitive thinking

- More informally, we meet with parents throughout the nursery year as and when necessary to discuss their child's particular needs.

### **Transition at Little Ellies**

We recognise that transition can be a stressful time for young children and as a result of this; we have a staggered approach to starting nursery. This ensures that children have time to settle into their new surroundings and practitioners get to know the children well.

At Little Ellies we have created good links with our main feeder nurseries and pre-school establishments in our local area.

To ensure the best possible transition we:

- Value the parent as the first educator of their child
- Make contact via phone and email with every feeder school within our new intake to discuss essential information on every child
- Complete a Transition document to pass on to the feeder schools
- Share important information about our setting during new-parents meeting
- Use written information sent by parents to inform early planning
- Hold a series of 'welcome/taster' sessions for parents and children before they begin formal transition in Nursery.
- Share information in a transition meeting with key adults for children with additional needs

### **Working with parents**

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

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 well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a Key Person in Nursery, who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their 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.

This is done by:

- Parent meetings with the teachers and staff three times a year
- Parent invitations to support communication and language sessions in multilingual ways in class
- Stay and Play sessions three times a year to promote quality first teaching tools and ideas so parents can support their child at home
- Key workshops throughout the year to help parents support their child at home
- Event days such as World Books day and other celebratory festivals encourage children to learn about other stories, cultures and traditions from their parents.
- Home school learning projects used to support development and learning taught in class, by creating an original masterpiece with parents at home.

## **Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures**

### **Oral Health**

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by invoking learning around healthy eating practices all year round. We also look at the importance of sugar levels in food and drinks and do this by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- How much sugar content there is in drinks
- The importance of brushing your teeth

We aim to introduce supervised tooth brushing and give guidance to children and parents around good practices to do with oral health and the importance of visiting the dentist every six months. We follow statutory guidance for safety around supervised tooth brushing and all guidance is supported by the Dental Wellness Trust.

### **Toileting and intimate care**

We believe that children with toileting needs should be admitted into the nursery with their cohort. These children have an educational entitlement irrespective of their difficulties with toileting. No child is excluded from participating in our nursery who may, for any reason, not yet be toilet trained and who may still be wearing nappies or equivalent. We work with parents towards toilet training, unless there are medical or other developmental reasons why this may not be appropriate at the time.

We see toilet training as a self-care skill that children have the opportunity to learn with the full support and non-judgemental concern of adults. All children are treated with dignity, care and compassion during nappy changing/toileting. Staff will ensure this time is relaxed; they do not make negative comments about nappy/toilet contents.

Within our nursery we aim to provide the opportunity for all children to use the toilet independently and to provide assistance for children who require it. Where children are in pull-ups, we will remind them at frequent intervals to use the toilet. If a child is in nappies, these will be changed as necessary and their changes documented accordingly. Our stance in Early Years remains one, that is supportive of toilet training and we aim to work in partnership with parents to help children achieve independence over their self care and personal hygiene.

In the case that a child has a known medical or SEND need, we will work collaboratively with the parents to ensure the child's needs are met and will support to change the child. *Please See Nappy Changing and Potty Training Policy.*

In all circumstances, a member of staff will be supervising this process to ensure the safeguarding of all children.

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy and meet the needs of the EYFS.