

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Written by: DGAT

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Building Community, Enriching Lives

Policy Statement

1. The ethos, values and relationships of the Trust, and its associated academies, is central to witnessing to the Trust's Christian foundation. The Trust is therefore committed to providing an environment which values, nurtures and celebrates the gifts and talents of all pupils within its care. To this end, the Trust will ensure that the Early Years Foundation Stage enable all children to flourish, physically, socially, morally, spiritually and culturally alongside helping them to develop an understanding of the world and become life-long learners.

Purpose and Scope:

2. This policy is intended to provide guidance to Local Governing Bodies, Principals, EYFS teaching staff and teaching assistance (TAs) in respect of the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage in each academy.

Definition

3. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In DGAT academies, children normally join the Reception class in the school year that they turn five.

Principles

4. In partnership with parents/carers, each DGAT academy will endeavour to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. Each academy aims to support children in their learning through "teaching and experiences that gives children the broad range of skills that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and in life" (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2012).
5. The EYFS is based upon four principles:
 - **A unique child** – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals who have a growing awareness of self and the world around them
 - **Positive relationships** – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent and helping them to understand the way that, in the context of church schools, the academy's Christian values impact on behaviours and relationships

- **Enabling environments** – where opportunities and experiences are responsive to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child
- **Learning and developing** – an acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

A Unique Child

6. DGAT academies recognise the potential of every child and acknowledge that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. DGAT academies recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by a range of factors, including feedback from others. DGAT academies will therefore take every opportunity to celebrate learning by using praise and encouragement. This will be in a variety of forms and may include celebration/sharing assemblies and rewards to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. Similarly, the ethos and values of the academy will inform behaviours and relationships as well as supporting children's understanding of, and response to, the world around them.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

7. All children and their families are valued at DGAT academies. Children are treated as unique individuals and have equal access to all provision available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the academy's Special Educational Needs co-ordinator is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with each academy's inclusion/SEN policies.
8. Each DGAT academy will meet the needs of its children through:
 - planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
 - ensuring that activities are balanced in order to meet the physical, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of children, alongside helping them to develop an understanding of the world and become life-long learners;
 - 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 to learn effectively;
 - providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;

- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Welfare

9. The Trust believe that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.
10. It is therefore important to the Trust that all children in DGAT academies are safe. Each academy will educate children to respect each other and their physical environment, and engender values which promote positive relationships. Children will be taught about self-discipline and boundaries and they will be helped to understand why rules and limits exist for the greater good of everyone. DGAT academies provide children with choices to help them understand the importance of decision making and the consequences of actions and decisions. Children should be allowed to take risks, but will be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. DGAT academies aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children (See Academy Safeguarding Policy).
11. DGAT academies are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2019. DGAT academies will therefore:
 - promote the welfare and safeguarding of children
 - promote good health, preventing 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 the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
 - ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
 - maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and children

12. The Trust recognise that children learn to be strong, independent learners from secure relationships. DGAT academies aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children, their families and other practitioners.

Parents as Partners

13. The Trust recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and DGAT academies value the contribution they make to the development and education of children. DGAT academies recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating children. DGAT academies do this through a range of strategies including, but not limited to:
- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in the academy;
 - providing opportunities for the children to spend time with their teacher before starting the academy during transfer sessions;
 - supporting children through the transition from pre-school to Reception with the children attending part time during the first few weeks (this is also to support staff and parents in getting to know each other as well as the children);
 - inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts the academy and again during the first half term of the child's Reception year in order to detail how the academy aims to work with their child, particularly in relation to reading and phonics;
 - encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. Some DGAT academies may invite parents to termly meetings at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. All parents will receive a report on their child's attainment and progress during each academy year;
 - arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between the child, the academy and parents: celebration assemblies, school visits;
 - providing parents with an opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development by completing "wow" vouchers which inform planning and provision;
 - ensuring all parents know that their child's teacher and teaching assistant are their key workers and
 - by providing a quiet and confidential area where parents are able to discuss any concerns.

Enabling Environments

14. Each DGAT academy will aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and 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.
15. Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure that each academy follows their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded, as appropriate.
16. Play-based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

Learning and Development

17. There are seven areas of learning and development which will determine the offer for all children in DGAT academies. Three of these are “prime areas,” and four “specific areas.”
18. The prime areas are:
 - Communication and language
 - Physical development
 - Personal, social, emotional and spiritual development.
19. The specific areas are:
 - Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Understanding of the world and
 - Expressive arts and design.
20. Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children’s development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child’s progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child’s parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the Special Needs Coordinator in order to access Special Educational Needs support.
21. At each DGAT academy areas of learning and development are implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play will be used as an essential part children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. The Trust acknowledge that children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. EYFS specialists will therefore determine in each academy the balance between activities led by children and activities led or guided by adults. Each practitioner will respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that each academy will review the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.
22. Planning and guided children’s activities will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. At each DGAT academy the staff will support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are:
 - **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and ‘having a go’;
 - **active learning** - children develop an understanding of perseverance by concentrating and keeping on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoying achievements; and

- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

23. Religious Education is an important feature of the curriculum and will be taught in the reception classes in accordance with Gloucestershire Agreed syllabus.

Equal Opportunities

24. All members of the DGAT academies are treated with equal respect. DGAT academies aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society. For more information, please see the academy's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Health and Safety

25. At DGAT academies, there are clear procedures for assessing risk which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment.

26. In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2012, DGAT academies ensure:

- Fresh drinking water is available at all times;
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required;
- Each classroom has a snack and sink area that can provide healthy snacks and drinks;
- A first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept;
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure is in place;
- A safeguarding policy is in place

Transitions

27. Transitions are carefully planned in all DGAT academies and time is given to ensure continuity of learning. Children attend introductory sessions to Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. They receive information about their new setting. All DGAT academies will organise transition events planned before children start in Reception.

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1

28. During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

29. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1. Transition days are arranged for Reception children to meet their new teachers. Regular 'moving up' sessions during the summer term ensure the children are familiar with their new classroom.
30. During the spring/summer term class teachers will be preparing the children for Year One. This may involve more structured activities for those children who display readiness for Key Stage One. They will be encouraged become more independent in preparation for the demands of the national curriculum in KS1

Related Policies

Equal Opportunities Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Policy

SEND Policy