October 2026

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Our School Ethos

A caring school with Christ at its centre. We strive for excellence and every child is encouraged to achieve their potential.
We respect and care for each person in our school community, valuing them for who they are and for all that they achieve.

The Ursuline Preparatory School does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

"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 in 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."

Early years foundation stage statutory framework, 2026

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Kindergarten year. In our school, where the EYFS is known as the Pre-Prep., all children join us at the beginning of the term after their 3rd birthday. We have a non-selective admissions policy.

The EYFS is based upon four themes:

1. A Unique Child;
2. Positive Relationships;
3. Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults;
4. Learning and Development;

1. A UNIQUE CHILD

At Ursuline Preparatory School we recognise that every child is a learner who can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others: we use praise and encouragement as well as reward stickers, marbles in the jar, house point charts, certificates, and the school behaviour management traffic light system (except Pre-Reception who use bucket filler/dipper) to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Ursuline Preparatory School are treated fairly, regardless of race, religion, or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children irrespective of gender, race and ability. All children have equal access to the curriculum.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience, and interests, and develop 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 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 activities for children with varying abilities and understandings in language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children will be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children (see Safeguarding Policy).

Welfare

"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."

Department for Education (DfE, 2023)

At Ursuline Preparatory School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2026 and KCSIE 2026.

We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare 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.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

2. POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

At Ursuline Preparatory School we recognise that children learn to

be strong and independent from strong relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parental Engagement

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we encourage them to participate in our home/school links.

We recognise the role that the parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- asking parents to complete a home link form before the child enters the school which gives background information about their child;
- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the children and parents have the opportunity to meet and spend time with their teacher before starting school during a drop-in session;
- inviting parents at the end of their child's first term at the school in Pre-Reception, to a brief meeting with the Headteacher to discuss their child's progress;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- encourage parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns via bi-annual formal meetings, ad hoc meetings as required and a written report. There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress (from Reception class onwards). Pre-Reception receive one report at the end of their time in the class.
- All children have a yellow reading record which is used as a two-way communication between the parent and the teacher.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents which include amongst other things; Mother's Day Assembly, Christingle Service, Prizegiving, school production, Sports Day Father's Day etc., Showbie, parent representative and the use of online platforms.

- Records will be kept of each child's development and achievement in the form of observations, annotated examples of work, photographs, checklists and dated comments on Tapestry (an online platform).

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children and their parents/carers, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teachers act as 'Key Person' to all children in the EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

3. ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

At Ursuline Preparatory School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development, and learning, in order to plan challenging but achievable activities and experiences.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning takes the form of:

- Long term plans. These identify main topics to be covered through the year.
- Medium term plans. These link the areas of learning and the Early Learning Goals.
- Short term plans (weekly). These include specific activity plans, differentiation for groups and individuals and organisational management including the role of the adults.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate.

At Ursuline Preparatory School, we record judgements against the EYFS Profile during the child's final term in Kindergarten. Each child's level of development is recorded against 17 assessment scales, derived from the Early Learning Goals (ELG's).

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their child's progress against the ELGs and assessment scales. We give an opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher. We report our EYFS profile results to the local authority when requested.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The environment is set up so children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS has 2 separate outdoor areas. St. Angela's Garden and the Secret Garden. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when the children are indoors. It offers the children chances to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

4. THE AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

At Ursuline Preparatory School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

There are seven areas of learning and development which shape our educational programme. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The three prime areas of learning are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Areas of Learning

The prime areas are:

<u>Prime</u>

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

<u>Specific</u>

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are ELGs that define the expectations

for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as in the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the engagement between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the ELGs throughout the EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build upon and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations;
- links with our wider local community.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING (COEL)

COEL advocate that in planning and guiding the children's activities, practitioners will reflect on the different ways that children learn and then reflect these in their practice. A child's individual learning characteristics will determine the way they respond to both the teaching and learning taking place in the environment.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are identified by the EYFS are:

- 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'.

5. TRANSITIONS WITHIN THE EYFS

Before starting in Pre-Reception:

- Parents are given a welcome pack
- First school visit – child and parent
- Second school visit – just child
- Third school visit – just child

Parents have a meeting with Miss Shiel (Pre Reception teacher), Mrs. Rushmer (Head of Pre-Prep.), Mr. Elango (ICT) and a representative from PFA on the 3rd visit.

Transition to Reception:

- Pre-Reception children periodically spend time in Reception throughout the term before they start in that class.
- Pre-Reception have a going-up morning in Reception.
- The Reception teachers have a meeting with parents.
- Parents are given a Welcome brochure.

Transition to Kindergarten:

- Kindergarten teacher spends time in Reception throughout the year.
- Kindergarten teacher holds a meeting with parents.
- Reception children spend a morning in Kindergarten.
- Parents are given a helpful hints information booklet.

Transition to Intermediate:

- Intermediate teacher holds meetings with parents
- Kindergarten children spend a morning in Intermediate
- Intermediate teacher receives a copy of the profile alongside a short report on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the characteristics of effective learning.

6. ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

We provide opportunities for children who have English as an additional language to develop and use their home language in play and learning, and we offer support with their language development at home. We ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for them to learn and reach a good standard of English language.

7. SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

We recognise that some children may require additional support. Where necessary, we will ask our Special Educational Needs (SEN) department for advice and support. We also have access to an Occupational Therapist and a Speech and Language Therapist for additional support.

8. ASSESSMENT AT THE END OF THE EYFS

In the final term in Kindergarten, the EYFS profile is completed for each child. This provides parents with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels and their readiness for Intermediate (Year One).

9. SAFEGUARDING

The Pre-Prep. Department is referenced specifically in the whole school (Safeguarding and Child Protection policy (available on the school website). It gives specific guidance regarding the use of all electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities not just mobile phones and cameras in the EYFS, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), training requirements and dealing with allegations of abuse. All incidents are inputted on the schools CPoms system which is monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

The Pre-Prep. Department follows the whole school Whistleblowing policy (available on the school website).

Child absences are specifically referenced in the whole school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy (available on the school website). Absences are followed up in a timely manner in accordance with our whole school Attendance policy (available on the school website).

The Pre-Prep. Department follow the whole school Late Collection Procedure. We hold two emergency contacts on record for children, more where possible.

10. COMPLAINTS

Written complaints about the fulfillment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints must be made available to ISI and OFSTED on request. Details of how to contact ISI/OFSTED are available online.

11. MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named governor for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head Teacher and the Head of Pre-Prep. will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

12. STAFF QUALIFICATIONS, TRAINING, SUPPORT AND SKILLS

Induction training takes place during the first week of employment and includes:

- Help in understanding roles and responsibilities
- Information about emergency evacuation procedures
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Health and safety issues
- All Pre-Prep. staff members hold current pediatric first aid (PFA) certificates and are retrained every 3 years.
- We require enhanced criminal records checks for volunteers (including those who are supervised) and will prevent new employees and volunteers from commencing employment before receiving their check.
  The Pre-Prep. Department is referenced specifically in the whole school Safer Recruitment policy (available on the school website).

13. STAFF:CHILD RATIOS

Our staffing arrangements meet the needs of the children and ensure their safety. We ensure that children are adequately supervised, especially whilst eating. According to Paragraph 3.47 of the EYFS statutory framework "Exceptionally, and where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, changes to the ratios may be made."

14. HEALTH/MEDICINES

We have a whole school procedure for responding to children who are ill or infectious. We follow the school's policy for administration of medicines, which includes systems for keeping information up to date. Prescription medicines must not be administered unless prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacists and written permission is gained from parents for individual medicines to be administered. We only administer non-prescribed medicines with verbal or written instruction from the parents.

15. FOOD AND DRINK

Fresh drinking water is accessible and available at all times. We follow the whole school Healthy Eating advice for healthy snacks and packed lunches. We follow the whole school Allergy Safety policy (which can be found on the school website).

When children are eating we follow the Safer Eating policy.

16. ACCIDENT OR INJURY

We inform parents of any accident or injury sustained by the child on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable, and any first aid treatment given. We keep electronic records (Medical Tracker) of accidents and injuries and each room has a comprehensive first aid bag.

Walkie-Talkies are taken when a class leaves the main building to explore the school grounds. This ensures contact with the school office in case of emergency.

In the event of a chocking incident, it would be logged according to the Health and Safety policy and Safer Eating policy (which can be found on the school website).

17. MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

Corporal punishment is not used or threatened and we manage the children in an appropriate way for their age. We would use physical intervention only to avert the immediate danger of personal injury.

18. PREMISES

Our premises meet the required indoor space requirements and we have access to 2 dedicated outdoor play areas on a daily basis which is used for planned activities and recreational use (known as the Secret Garden and St. Angela's Garden). We have adequate toilets and hand basins which are cleaned on a regular basis. We only release children into the care of individuals who we have been told are collecting them. We require parents to inform us in writing of the names and contact details of those authorised to collect. We hold the appropriate insurance policies for the premises.

19. INFORMATION AND RECORDS

Where possible, we hold more than two emergency contacts for each child.

We maintain confidential records regarding staff and pupils with access only available to those who have a right or a professional need to see them. We provide extensive information for parents in our Welcome Pack which is given to all new children.