



Stella Maris Catholic Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

September 2026-2027

Our School Mission is what God sent us into the world to do – to help build His Kingdom through learning, playing, and making friends together.

The tools we will use to do this are: Loving, Caring, Sharing, Trusting and Respect



Introduction

“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 foundation children need to fulfil their potential.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, (Group and School-Based Providers), Department for Education.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth until the end of the Reception year. It is based upon four overarching principles:

- ♥ A unique Child - every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- ♥ Positive Relationships - children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- ♥ Enabling Environments - children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- ♥ Learning and Developing - **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

This policy will outline how we implement the EYFS through these four main principles, here at Stella Maris Catholic Primary School. These principles are woven through our whole school ethos and Mission, to **“help build God’s kingdom through learning, playing and making friends together”**. Our school family is founded on love for one another and built upon the Gospel values of Love, Trust, Care, Share and Respect. We provide children with a secure and confident start to their school life, nurturing a love for learning. This journey begins the moment they join our Reception class, the Imps Class.



A Unique Child

*"Every child
is a different
kind of flower
and altogether make this
world a beautiful garden."
-ANON-*

We recognise that when children join our Stella Maris family, they each bring with them a wide range of skills, abilities, interests and personalities. So too do they have different experiences and understanding of the world. We promote **independence** so that children have the confidence to develop their own ideas and the freedom to express them. We understand the importance of **challenge** and the value of taking risks to move learning forwards. We know that all children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Here are some of the ways that we ensure that children experience their own personal learning journeys:

- ♥ We tune into the children's interests and plan meaningful learning opportunities around these interests (based on existing knowledge and experience).
- ♥ We foster intrigue, curiosity, creativity, adventure, determination, imagination, cooperation, investigation and conversation!
- ♥ Children are provided with rich, real-life experiences which develop their own understanding of the world.
- ♥ The children explore, investigate and discover through a mix of child initiated and adult led learning experiences.
- ♥ Children play an active role in shaping these learning experiences by planning and making decisions about what they would like to do and then reviewing their learning.
- ♥ A variety of teaching strategies are used – individual, small group and whole class, which are adapted according to individual learning needs.
- ♥ Each child's progress is monitored closely by the EYFS staff and FFT is used to record
- ♥ We place high importance on each child's emotional well-being and involvement which has a direct impact upon learning and development.
- ♥ **Every child matters** and we value the diversity of all children within our school.

Positive Relationships

Here at Stella Maris we pride ourselves on the secure and positive relationships that we have worked hard to build and continue to develop. We understand that for children to thrive within their environment and to engage with learning opportunities, they need to feel loved, respected and valued. This extends beyond the classroom door at Stella Maris. Once children

join the Imps, they will be warmly welcomed into the whole school family. Children will also be assigned a “buddy” from Year 6 who will help guide them into their new surroundings and support them throughout their first year at school. In fact the Imps are very much like celebrities when they first join us, as everyone just can’t wait to meet them!



We recognise the valuable contribution that parents and carers make towards children’s learning and we strive to build healthy and positive relationships with families. We actively encourage involvement in school life. We do this by:

- ♥ Meeting children and their parents/carers before beginning school, via meetings, home visits and transition sessions.
- ♥ Inviting children to stay and play sessions in the Summer term prior to starting school.
- ♥ Encouraging families to support children’s development of reading by sending reading books home to be shared on a daily basis.
- ♥ Regular parent consultations, weekly curriculum newsletters and end of year reports.
- ♥ Providing workshops to share our approaches to learning in certain areas e.g. Phonics and writing.
- ♥ Holding a termly celebration of the children’s work, inviting parents to the classroom.
- ♥ Operating an open-door policy and encouraging parents/carers to speak to us to share any celebrations, concerns or worries.

Enabling Environments

- ♥ We aim to provide a rich and varied learning environment to evoke children’s curiosity and increase their motivation to explore, imagine, think and create! Carefully planned resources within the learning environment are stimulating, multi-sensory and well organised. This encourages child involvement thus maximising the development of learning experiences.
- ♥ The Imps class environment includes both the indoor and outdoor classroom areas, with clearly defined areas and carefully planned resources. This “continuous provision” is designed to offer open ended, practical learning opportunities that are linked to real life. This provision is then enhanced to deepen and extend learning

opportunities, through the addition of different resources in response to particular interests of children or to promote another aspect of learning.

- ♥ Resources are clearly labelled and organised into areas of learning, enabling the children to access them with a high level of independence.
- ♥ Most child-initiated sessions include free-flow access to the outdoor area. The dedicated outdoor area is used in all-weather so the children have access to wet weather capes when needed!
- ♥ Children also have access to the wider school grounds which are plentiful. Children can enjoy the sensory garden, nature paths along the banks of the school grounds, fire pit area, pond and the peace garden.



Learning and development

♥ At Stella Maris we recognise play as a learning tool that brings together social, emotional, sensory, linguistic and physical development. We believe that young children develop and learn best through high quality play and first-hand experiences, with the companionship of other children and the support of adults who provide challenge, facilitate and broaden learning opportunities.

♥ Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. As such, learning opportunities at Stella Maris are a combination of child initiated and adult led.

♥ We deliver a creative curriculum following the Power of Reading scheme and each term's topic is focused around a chosen picture book e.g. We're going on a bear hunt.

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development:

PRIME AREAS

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

SPECIFIC AREAS

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design

Within these areas of learning, there are 17 Early learning Goals (ELGs) which refer to the knowledge, skills and understanding that the children should have attained by the end of their first year in school. During the academic year, children's progress against these early learning goals is continually observed, recorded and used to inform next steps for learning. At the end of the year, the school reports each child's level of development to the Department of Education. Practitioners record whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching those thresholds, categorized as emerging.

Transition into Year 1

- ♥ The data summarizing whether a child has met the expected levels of development or is "emerging" is then shared with the Year 1 teacher to successfully map out future learning steps.
- ♥ In the final Reception term, we run a comprehensive transition programme to support children moving from EYFS to Key Stage 1. This involves getting to know the Year 1 teacher and classroom environment. A special book including photos can be created for children who may need additional support to help with this transition.
- ♥ The Year 1 classroom environment is thoughtfully constructed to reflect core aspects of the EYFS, utilising continuous provision elements. Year 1 children also enjoy dedicated access to outdoor learning.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

At Stella Maris Catholic Primary School, the safety, health and well-being of our children are our highest priorities. We strictly adhere to the mandatory safeguarding and welfare standards outlined in Section 3 of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Group and School-Based Providers).

In line with Statutory updates, our school enforces the following core protective measures:

Safe Recruitment and Vetting Standards

1. Enhanced DBS checks for volunteers in accordance with the updated framework, any volunteer who works unsupervised with EYFS children- or whose role makes it likely they will do so- must have a current, clear DBS successfully processed before starting their role.
2. Complete safer recruitment and vetting logs are maintained centrally on the school's Single Central Record (SCR).

Children's Screen Use and Digital Technology

1. Technology is integrated into learning only when it is intentional and enriches student development. In accordance with the DFE statutory screen time guidance for early years settings.

Environment and Premise Safety

1. The school acknowledges its statutory duty to report any allegations of harm (lowered from the previous threshold of serious harm) involving any staff member, volunteer, or individual on school premises to Ofsted and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Please refer to the school website for all other school policies.