



# Harriers Banbury Academy

an Aspirations Academy

**POLICY TITLE:** Early Years Policy

**Persons with Responsibility:**

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**Policy History:**

Issue No.	Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Next Review Date
4	September 2021	Reviewed JS and AW		September 2022
3	September 2020	Reviewed JS and AW	Reference to Lower Phase instead of Key Stage 1	September 2021
2	September 2019	JA, JS and AW	Updated for new Tapestry and baseline	September 2020
1	September 2018	JA, JS and AW		September 2019



## **Early Years Policy**

### **Our Values**

Our belief in Early Years at Harriers Banbury Academy is that every child should be given the best start to life and we build a curriculum that is centred on meeting every child's needs.

Early Years at Harriers Banbury Academy comprises of children from ages 3 to 5. A large amount of time is spent developing personal, social and emotional skills. By valuing these skills, the children can develop resilience and confidence in themselves in order to transition through the rest of the school. We also strongly value our belief in our behaviour policy, understanding that all behaviour is communication. Focussing upon allowing children to express themselves and to understand why they may feel or act a certain way forms a large role in our pedagogy within Early Years. We also continue these beliefs into Lower Phase as children from Early Years transition each September.

### **Our Structure**

Our Early Years Unit is located at one end of the school; the Nursery and Reception classes are in two different buildings but share areas throughout the week to integrate learning. Nursery children can join the term after they turn 3 years old, and we offer three intakes throughout the year: September, January and April. The choices offered to Nursery applicants are: 30 hours of free child care (if eligible) which is taken from 8.30am to 3.05pm daily; morning sessions, which are from 8.30am to 11.30am; afternoon sessions, which are from 12pm to 3.05pm. Home visits are made to each child before they begin, and each child is invited to view the setting before they start their sessions.

When a new child starts with us, they are invited to a 'stay and play' or 'meet and greet' session before their start date where they are given a booklet of information and they will be offered a home visit.

Reception children join in the September after their fourth birthday. The day in Reception is from 8.45 am to 3.00pm. The first week in September is a transition week, where the children do half days. This is to introduce them to the environment gradually and calmly and they will meet the children in their class in their session before they meet the other class who share the room. All children are visited prior to their start date, and this is usually a visit to their nursery setting to speak to their current key worker.

The day in Reception will involve four set lessons: Phonics, maths, handwriting, and an area of the curriculum. These 4 lessons are situated at the start and end of the morning and afternoon. Between each lesson is "choosing time" where the children can independently access the environment and the adults in the room either do interventions or observe to gather evidence for each child's journal. Learning through play is highly valued in our setting.

We aim for a great proportion of the day to be devoted to child-initiated learning. Children learn best through exploration and experimentation and our curriculum reflects this. All children will be involved in adult-directed carpet sessions throughout the day at various levels related to the age and stage of the individuals. For those who are here for lunch, we offer the opportunity to bring a packed lunch or have a hot school meal. We are part of the fruit and milk schemes that give children one piece of fruit and a carton of milk a day. These snacks can be taken at any point in the day and water is freely available. Eating is a social event and helps children to develop their skills in this area of learning.

## **Learning Environment**

The Learning Environment within the Early Years Unit is organised into the seven areas of learning both indoors and outdoors. Children can freely access resources in all areas. Labels, pictures and displays clearly indicate the resources available. The children are responsible for the tidying of resources with the support of the staff. The children are encouraged to show responsibility and respect for the environment.

Communication skills underpin all learning so we offer great opportunities to develop these skills through the use of visual aids, signing and speech. The role of the interactor is to facilitate child-initiated learning through having a clear understanding of the curriculum from age phases 16-26 months leading into the Lower Phase curriculum. There is a great focus on the Three Prime Areas: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development.

We also encourage children to leave bottles, dummies and nappies at home (unless there is a medical reason why they need to wear a nappy). It has been proven that speech is greatly improved when children stop using dummies and bottles at an early age. Parents and Carers are asked to bring a change of clothes for children in case they have an accident. We have changing facilities on site and can support parents/carers in toilet training children through sticker charts and reward schemes.

## **Parent Engagement**

The link between teacher and parent is extremely important. We use Tapestry as our communication tool with parents to communicate letters and notices. Tapestry is also used to set and receive homework, and it is a good resource for parents to ask any questions about their child's day.

Within the first 3 weeks of term we arrange "5 minute chats" with parents to discuss how their child has settled into the unit. This is on top of the 2 parent evenings that coordinate with the rest of the school.

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is paramount to all staff. We follow the Safeguarding Policy shared across the school. All Early Years entrances and exits are secured with either handles above the height of children, or with magnetic safety locks that prevent doors from being opened. Access to the garden is constantly available and there is no access into the school grounds during the day unless a visitor enters through reception.

## **Health and Safety**

Equipment is carefully monitored for wear and tear. Children are encouraged to be independent but there is always an element of supervision to ensure their safety. Children are encouraged to use equipment safely, to carry it carefully (e.g. scissors, construction equipment) and to put it away tidily, leaving floors clear and uncluttered. Toilets are checked by staff throughout the day and a daily risk assessment takes place to ensure safety in the environment.

At least two members of staff working in the unit are paediatric first aid trained. The first aid box is clearly accessible. Medicines will only be administered in accordance to the school's policy. All emergency contact numbers are held in the school office alongside allergy and medical information.

## **Equal Opportunities**

We aim to ensure that all children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum regardless of race, gender, ability or social background. Planning recognises the needs and abilities of all children, including those with special educational needs.

### **Assessment and Record Keeping**

All pupils are baselined at the start of their time with us at Harriers using either a formal approach (trialled in Reception September 2019) or informally through observations and activities. Assessments are then ongoing and daily and are in the form of extended and short observations on Tapestry, self-initiated work, adult-directed tasks and oral discussion. These are then stored in exercise books and/or online on Tapestry for each individual child. These inform a pupil's profile. The online Learning Journeys are kept up to date regularly by a pupil's key worker and are accessible to parents/carers. Evidence of achievement is used to inform planning and next steps for groups and individual children.

We have many forms of tracking to ensure every child makes progress throughout their time in the unit. Tracking comes in the form of online learning journeys, class tracking grids, and individual assessment tracker grids. These are analysed at least four times a year.

### **Links with other policies In Early Years**

We follow the school's policies for Behaviour, Child Protection, Equal Opportunities, Literacy, Anti-Bullying, Special Educational Needs, Intimate Care, SRE, Drug education, Health and Safety and Teaching and Learning.

### **Staffing, Equipment and Resources**

Our unit is led by an Early Years Coordinator. We have a good minimum adult to child ratio of at least 1:8 in Nursery and employ extra practitioners to give a greater adult to child ratio on a daily basis. All staff are key workers for children in Foundation Stage. They take on an area of responsibility in the classes which includes: setting up, displays, tidying and ensuring resources are kept up to date and well stocked. At least one activity from each area of learning is set out on a daily basis both inside and outside before the children arrive for their day. We have a rota for leading input (carpet) sessions, outside, interaction and adult-directed activities. Every adult in the unit devotes time to their key family children weekly and take the time to greet each child as they come into school.

Resources are made accessible to children and therefore there is an emphasis on taking responsibility for looking after our equipment and tidying up. Each child is given an area of the unit to tidy/pack away daily in the Reception classes and pupils in the Nursery classes are encouraged to help staff to tidy up. Staff support the children with this task and encourage independence.

### **Staff Development and Support**

A clear appraisal cycle is in place for all staff in the school. This cycle offers opportunities to develop skills through CPD. Oxfordshire's 'Step into Training' is available for all EYU staff to access. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their current practices through briefing meetings. The EYU Coordinator supports staff through regular in house training sessions and having an open door policy where everyone's ideas are listened to.

New staff and volunteers are supported with information about the children, timetables, confidentiality and rules/routines. We aim to provide continuity and security for children by ensuring a familiar adult is always around. For this reason, PPA is taken at separate times in the week. Support for planning and assessment is therefore given through team meetings.

### **Partnerships with Parents/Carers, the Community and Agencies**

The involvement of family members in Early Years is very important. Families are encouraged to be actively involved in the education of the children. We welcome families to help in the classroom, assisting the children with activities, making resources, fundraising and supporting us in educational visits. We also welcome support at home. Children are given the opportunity to take books home and complete fun

activities to support their learning. Parents and Carers are informed about their child's learning through termly newsletters, signs and texts. They are encouraged to partake in assessment procedures by adding experiences at home onto Tapestry. It is very important to us that the communication between school and home is good for a child so we send out regular questionnaires to seek the views of parents/carers and children about what they like and what they would like to see improved upon.

Regular community events are held to encourage children to feel like they belong. This includes working with the rest of the school for events such as fundraising, inviting community members into the school and going out to visit others in the surrounding area. With this in mind, we also work very closely with other professionals and agencies such as Family support, Social Services, Health Agencies (School Nurse, Health Visitors, SALT) and Community Support (PCSO). Parents and Carers often need support to help meet the needs of their child so we also act as a facilitator to point them in the right direction to access what they need. We believe in raising the importance of working together to shape each child's future.