Thorntree Academy

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Early Years Policy

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Statement of intent

At Thorntree Academy, we greatly value the importance of the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's readiness for the next stage of their education, and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and parents/carers.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (Department for Education) (2021) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DfE (2022) 'Early years foundation stage profile: 2023 handbook'
- DfE (2021) 'Development Matters'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2015) 'The Prevent duty'
- Early Education (2021) 'Birth to 5 Matters'
- UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) 'Education for a Connected World'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Assessment Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Single Equality Scheme
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Managing Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Data Protection Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body will be responsible for:

- Ensuring there is a policy in place to safeguard children that includes an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child, the use of mobile phones and cameras, and staff safeguarding training requirements. These issues are addressed in part in this policy and in further detail in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

- Ensuring there is a policy in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff (including supply staff) or a volunteer. These issues are addressed in the trust's Statement of Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff and Volunteers.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the trust's Complaints Procedure.

The EYFS lead, in conjunction with the headteacher, will have responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.

Staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff and volunteers, will be responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with, and following, this policy.
- Remaining alert to any issues of concern in children.

3. Aims

Through the implementation of this policy, we will aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Work alongside parents/carers to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.

Four overarching principles shape will our practice:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between the school and parents/carers.
- **Learning and development** is important. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

To put these principles into practice, the school will:

- Provide a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers.

- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Assign each child with a key person to ensure that each child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs.
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment.

4. Learning and development

In partnership with parents/carers, the school will promote the learning and development of children to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education.

The EYFS provision and practice will be based on an observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development. Learning and development in school will be planned to reflect these interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two important and interconnected sections – prime and specific:

The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and language:
  - Listening, attention and understanding
  - Speaking
- Physical development:
  - Gross motor skills
  - Fine motor skills
- Personal, social and emotional development:
  - Self-regulation
  - Managing self
  - Building relationships

The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy:
  - Comprehension
  - Word reading
  - Writing
- Mathematics:
  - Numbers
  - Numerical patterns
- Understanding the world:
  - Past and present
  - People, culture and communities
  - The natural world
- Expressive arts and design:
  - Creating with materials

- Being imaginative and expressive

In organising and implementing educational programmes, the school will ensure that a broad range of activities and experiences are planned, having regard to three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, use what they know in their play and are willing to try new things.
- Active learning – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and use what they already know to learn new things, and develop strategies for doing things.

5. Assessment

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum provides the basis for planning in our two year old setting, Nursery and Reception classes. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are supported by the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. Our planning is based upon projects/themes with discrete lessons in phonics, reading, pre writing/writing and maths.

Practitioners select themes according to children's interests, experiences and prior learning. Progress and curriculum coverage are monitored half-termly. Each learning area in the classrooms and outdoor areas have provision plans, which identify learning opportunities and suggested enhancements. Staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. They also respond to children's social and emotional needs as well as their academic achievement.

Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support.

Parents/carers will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development, and the EYFS lead will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents/carers.

Ongoing formative assessments will be used to assess the day-to-day learning and development of children in the EYFS. Practitioners interact and observe children to understand their interests and learning needs, and will use this information to inform practice and provision for each child.

The EYFS setting will undertake a summative assessment of the level of each child's development at certain stages. These are:

- Progress check at age two – a short written summary of children's development in the prime areas.
- Reception Baseline Assessment – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception year.
- The EYFS Profile – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1.

The school will ensure that teachers actively engage children, their parents/carers and other adults who have significant interaction with specific children in their assessment processes to provide a well-rounded picture of their development and attainment.

The school will ensure that assessment processes do not prevent teachers and practitioners from spending as much time as possible interacting with children and directly supporting their learning and development. Teachers will not be required to record or document evidence to prove children's level of development; however, they may decide to record particularly noteworthy achievements in order to plan teaching and where this is beneficial for building knowledge of children.

The school will report EYFS Profile results to the Local Authority (LA) when these are requested. The LA is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

The EYFS lead will discuss any cause for concern in a child's progress with the child's parents/carers, especially where this concern relates to the prime areas of learning. A strategy of support will be agreed upon and consideration will be taken as to whether the child may have SEND which requires additional support.

The school will take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good standard of English. During assessment, if it is found that a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, the EYFS lead will contact the child's parents/carers to establish their home language skills to establish whether there is cause for concern about a language delay.

Assessment procedures will be set out in full in the Assessment Policy.

6. Inclusion

All children will be valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. The Single Equality Scheme will ensure that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy will ensure all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO.

The EYFS curriculum will be planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

Two Year Old Provision

Within our Early Years we cater for children who are part of the two year old scheme. This is can be a morning or an afternoon provision running three hours per session daily. Our two year olds are fully integrated within our nursery life, however have their own separate learning space. Getting to know some of our most vulnerable children while they access our two year old provision supports our understanding of their needs and aids a smooth transition into our school nursery.

When a child is aged between 2 and 3, practitioners review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

7. The learning environment and outdoor spaces

The learning environment will be organised in such a way that children can explore and learn independently in a safe and interactive environment.

Children will have access to an enclosed outdoor environment, and daily access to the outdoor environment is planned, unless circumstances, such as the weather, would make outdoor activity inappropriate and unsafe.

There will be toilet facilities available to the EYFS, and there will be appropriate, hygienic changing facilities located within this area containing a supply of towels and spare clothes. Nappy changing facilities will also be available.

8. Safeguarding and welfare

All necessary steps will be taken to keep the children in our care safe and well. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS will be required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Paul Watson (Headteacher). The Deputy DSL is Kath Allan (Parent Support Advisor).

The DSL will be responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate. The deputy DSL will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL. The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required.

Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.

9. Mobile phones and devices

For the purposes of this policy, the term **"mobile phone"** refers to any electronic device that can be used to take images or record videos, including tablets.

Photography policies and procedures are addressed in full in our Acceptable Use Policy.

Use of personal mobile phones by staff members

Staff members will not use personal mobile phones or cameras when children are present. Staff may use mobile phones on school premises outside of working hours when no children are present. Staff may use mobile phones in the staffroom during breaks and non-contact time. Mobile phones will be safely stored and in silent mode whilst children are present.

Staff may take mobile phones on trips, but they will only be used in emergencies and should not be used when children are present. Mobile phones will not be used to take images or videos at any time during trips.

Staff who do not adhere to this policy will face disciplinary action. Staff will report any concerns about another staff member's use of mobile phones to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Statement of Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff and Volunteers.

Staff may use their professional judgement in emergency situations.

Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, visitors and contractors

Posters will be used around the school to indicate that it is a mobile free zone.

Parents/carers, visitors and contractors will not be permitted to take photographs or record videos without prior permission. Parents/carers may take photographs and videos only containing their own child during school events. Parents/carers may take group photographs at school events but only with the informed consent of the parents/carers of the children involved.

The school strongly advises against the publication of any photographs or videos taken by parents/carers while at the school or school events on social media. Staff will report all concerns about parents/carers, visitors and contractors to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Use of the school's mobile phones and cameras

Staff will be provided with a school device to ensure that only school devices are used to take photographs and videos. School devices will have passcode protection.

School devices will only be used for work related matters, e.g. recording and documenting a child's learning. School devices will only be used to take photographs in the presence of another staff member and only with the consent of the child's parent.

Staff will not take photographs of bruising or injuries for child protection reasons. Instead, any concerns relating to safeguarding and child protection will be logged via CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) and the DSL/Deputy DSL alerted.

School devices will not be taken off school premises without prior written permission from the headteacher. Where staff members have concerns over material on a school device, they will report all concerns to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

10. Computing lessons

Computing lessons will be used to give children the opportunity to use technology, equip them for the demands of the developing digital world, and prepare them for the next step in their education. When teaching computing and utilising technology, e.g. laptops and tablets, the school will have due regard for the 'Education for a Connected World' framework when shaping what children are taught. The school aims to:

- Help children work more independently.
- Enable children to develop and enhance their work.
- Encourage children to collaborate on projects.
- Give children the skills and tools to access a wide range of information, ideas and cultures.
- Help children develop skills that can be used in other areas of the curriculum.
- Help children develop good control and coordination through using computing equipment.
- Encourage children to represent their ideas, thoughts and feelings through technology.

In accordance with the DfE's 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage', all educational programmes offered by the setting, including computing, will work towards the early learning goals (ELGs). This will include:

- **Communication and language**: Computing helps children to develop their self-expression confidence and skills, and allows them to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development**: using interactive programmes, computer mice, keyboards and touch screens helps children develop their coordination, control and movement.
- **Personal, social and emotional development**: technology gives children access to new ways to express their emotions and interact with others.
- **Literacy**: the internet gives children to access a vast range of media and materials.
- **Mathematics**: computing enhances children's experiences of learning mathematics and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems, and describing shapes, spaces and measure.
- **Understanding the world**: children will be taught to use the internet to enhance their knowledge of people, places, technology and their physical environment.
- **Expressive arts and design**: interactive games, activities and materials will be used to encourage children to share their creativity and ideas.

Teachers will not use formative assessments for computing, but will use summative assessments to help track children's progress. Resources will be shared fairly between children and, where needed, tasks and equipment will be adjusted to suit children's needs and abilities.

The EYFS lead will be responsible for ensuring all staff and parents/carers are aware of the setting's policy on using technology. The EYFS lead will hold the teachers and support staff to account for their delivery and support of the computing curriculum and offer support where needed.

Staff delivering the computing curriculum will be responsible for:

- Encouraging children to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of computing in other areas of learning.
- Tailoring lesson delivery according to children's age and respective abilities.
- Undertaking summative assessments to ensure the aims set out in this policy are being met.

- Keeping the EYFS lead informed about how the aims of the setting's computing curriculum are being achieved.
- Supporting children through play and teaching to recognise how technology is used across their lives, such as in their home and school.

The Online Safety Policy will be always adhered to. This includes installing internet filters and antivirus software on all devices and ensuring children are supervised appropriately when using the internet. In the event of children accessing inappropriate content online, safeguarding procedures will be followed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection and Policy.

11. Health and safety

The school will promote the good health of children in the EYFS, including the promotion of good oral health.

The EYFS lead will report any accident or injury involving a child to their parents/carers on the day it occurs, and any first-aid treatment administered to a child will also be reported to their parents/carers. Accidents and injuries will be recorded in an accident book, located in the main reception. The headteacher will report any serious accident, illness, injury, or death of a child whilst in the school's care to Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable, but within 14 days of the incident occurring. Local child protection agencies will also be notified.

First-aid boxes are located in the Reception classroom, main staffroom and food technology room.

Only medicine prescribed to a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist will be administered. The school's Managing Children with Medical Conditions Policy outlines the procedures for administrating medicines and name the staff who are trained to do so.

Any food or drink provided to children will be healthy, balanced and nutritious. The headteacher will notify Ofsted of any incidents of food poisoning affecting two or more children within 14 days of the incident. Information about any dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and any special health requirements a child has will be recorded. Fresh drinking water will be always available.

Smoking will not be permitted on the school premises.

The Health and Safety Policy outlines the full health and safety policies and procedures.

The school will have a Fire Safety Policy in place.

12. Staff taking medication or other substances

The school will implement a zero-tolerance approach to drugs and alcohol misuse, as outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct.

The use of alcohol or any other substance that may affect the ability to care for children by a member of staff will not be tolerated. If there is a reason to believe a member of staff is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance, they will not be allowed to work directly with children and further action will be taken.

Any member of staff taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children will seek medical advice. Staff will only be allowed to work directly with the children if it is confirmed that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after children properly.

Any medication used by staff will be securely stored.

13. Staffing

A robust Safer Recruitment Policy will be in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable.

Upon employment, all EYFS staff will receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.

Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.

All members of staff who have contact with children and families will be supervised by the EYFS lead. The supervision will provide opportunities for staff to:

- Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
- Identify solutions to address issues.
- Receive coaching to improve their effectiveness.

The EYFS lead will hold at least a full and relevant level 3 qualification alongside at least two years' experience working in an early years setting. At least half of the other EYFS staff will hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification.

All staff working within the EYFS setting hold a current Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate. This ensures that every member of the team is equipped to respond to medical emergencies and provide appropriate first aid care at all times.

Any member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking after a group of children will hold a PFA certificate. All newly qualified staff with a level 2 or 3 qualification will be PFA trained. The school will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years. The list of staff who hold PFA certificates can be found in the Health and Safety Policy and Managing Children with Medical Conditions Policy.

The school will provide a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'. Only members of staff with level 2 English and maths qualifications will count towards the staffing ratios at level 3.

The school will adopt the following staffing ratios:

- For children aged two:
    - There will be one member of staff for every four children.
    - At least one staff member will hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

- At least half of the other staff members will hold full and relevant level 2 qualifications.

- For children aged three and over:
  - Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, there will be one member of staff for every 13 children, and at least one other member of staff will hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.
  - Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is not working directly with the children, there will be one member of staff for every 8 children, and at least one other member of staff will hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.
- For children in Reception classes:
  - Class sizes will be limited to 30 children per school teacher.

Only under exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and safety of children is maintained, will changes be made to the ratios. Parents/carers will be informed about staffing arrangements and, when relevant and practical, will be involved in staffing arrangement decisions.

Each child will be assigned a key person whose role it is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The EYFS lead will inform parents/carers of whom their child's key person is and will explain the role of the key person when their child begins attending the school.

14. Information and records

Information will be stored in line with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with regard to the school's Data Protection Policy.

The following information will be recorded for each child:

- The child's name and date of birth
- The name and address of every parent or carer who is known to the school, including information about all persons who have parental responsibility for the child and which parent or carer the child normally lives with
- The emergency contact details of the child's parent or carer

The following information about the school will be recorded:

- The school's name, address and telephone number
- The school's certificate of registration
- The name, address and telephone number of anyone who will regularly be in unsupervised contact with the children
- A daily record of the names of the children being cared for in the school, their hours of attendance, and the names of each child's key person

The following information will be made available to parents/carers:

- The school's privacy notice for parents/carers and children
- How the school delivers the EYFS and how parents/carers can access more information

- The daily routine and the activities offered in the school's EYFS and how parents/carers can assist their child's learning at home
- How the school's EYFS supports children with SEND
- Details of the food and drink provided to the children
- Details of the policies and procedures in place in the school's EYFS
- Staffing details, including the name of their child's key person and their role and a telephone number for parents/carers to contact in an emergency

Ofsted will be notified if there are any changes to the following:

- The address of the school
- The school's contact details
- The hours during which care is provided
- Any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of the school or any person who cares for, or is in regular contact with, children to look after children

15. Parental involvement

We firmly believe that the EYFS cannot function without the enduring support of parents/carers.

Parents/carers will be invited to termly parents/carers' meetings; however, the school has an open-door policy and parents/carers are welcome to talk to teachers at the start and end of the school day. A private space will be utilised for confidential discussions between staff and parents/carers.

Parents/carers will be asked to sign permission slips for any visits out of school, use of photographs of their child and using the internet at school.

Parents/carers will be asked to complete admission forms and a medical form for their child to help the school to understand their character and personality.

16. Transition periods

The following process will be in place to ensure children's successful transition to Year 1:

- Parents/carers will be invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and allocation of classes, and to voice any concerns they may wish to express.
- The children will be invited to a number of visits throughout the year to their Year 1 class. The first visits will be within their pre-school settings, allowing the children to feel secure in the new environment. In the Summer term, the children will visit at least once without the support of the early years practitioners or parents/carers.
- In the Summer term, Reception and Year 1 staff will meet to discuss each child's development in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1.

17. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body and the headteacher.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS will be required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is March 2023.