



Early Years Policy

Date policy last reviewed:	September 2026
Next review due:	September 2027

Contents:

[Statement of intent](#)

1. [Legal framework](#)
2. [Roles and responsibilities](#)
3. [Learning and development](#)
4. [Assessment](#)
5. [Inclusion](#)
6. [The learning environment](#)
7. [Safeguarding and welfare](#)
8. [Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment](#)
9. [Parental involvement](#)
10. [Transition](#)
11. [Monitoring and review](#)

Statement of intent

Early Years at Radwinter

The Reception Year lays the foundation for all future learning. At Radwinter CofE Primary School, we believe that a positive start to school, knowing each child as an individual, and building strong relationships with both children and parents, supported by our Christian ethos, has a lasting impact on their learning journey. Our school vision – *“Growing and learning together to embrace life in all its fullness”* – underpins everything we do.

We are guided by four key principles:

1. **Every child is unique.** We support each child’s social, emotional, and educational development through caring and knowledgeable staff.
2. **Positive relationships build confidence.** Children learn to be happy, independent, resilient, and caring through supportive connections with adults and peers.
3. **Enabling environments support learning.** Children of all abilities thrive when adults respond to their interests and needs, helping them build knowledge and skills overtime.
4. **Strong partnerships with parents and carers.** Working together ensures children get the best start and continue to flourish

What will children learn?

At Radwinter, we offer a curriculum full of wonder and memorable experiences. We provide a stimulating environment that encourages curiosity, challenge, exploration, adventure, and a lifelong love of learning.

Our intent is that all children develop physically, verbally, cognitively, and emotionally in an environment that values all cultures, communities, and people. We aim for children to be confident, independent, and self-assured, while interacting positively with others.

Play is central to learning in the EYFS. We balance adult-led activities with uninterrupted child-initiated play to achieve the best outcomes. Warm, positive relationships between staff and children, consistent routines, and strong partnerships with parents underpin our approach.

We also prioritise health and wellbeing, ensuring children understand the importance of hygiene, nutrition, and dental health. Staff supervise all snack and mealtimes, modelling healthy eating, promoting safe food handling, and encouraging positive attitudes to food.

1. Legal framework

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**
- **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)**
- **Data Protection Act 2018**
- **DfE: Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage** in force at the time
- **DfE: Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook** in force at the time
- **STA: Early Years Foundation Stage Assessment and Reporting Arrangements** in force at the time
- **DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education** in force at the time
- **DfE: Working Together to Safeguard Children** in force at the time
- Any other relevant statutory or local authority guidance in force at the time

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Photography and Images Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- SEND Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Whole-school Food Policy
- Healthy Eating and Drinking Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction.
- Holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and the effective and efficient performance management of staff.
- Ensuring that appropriate policies, procedures, and practices are in place to deliver the EYFS statutory requirements.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with the Headteachers' Standards and the expectations of the school community.
- Creating a culture in which children experience a positive and enriching school life.
- Upholding ambitious educational standards which prepare children from all backgrounds for the next phase of education and life.
- Ensuring teaching is underpinned by high levels of subject expertise.
- Ensuring valid, reliable, and proportionate approaches are used when assessing children's knowledge and understanding, and that formative assessment is used effectively.
- Understanding and acting within the statutory assessment frameworks.

- Ensuring all relevant staff read and implement this policy.
- Ensuring staff receive the appropriate training to deliver and report EYFS assessments.
- Ensuring parents are informed about their child's progress, development, and any relevant targets, and are aware of relevant early years policies, practices, and procedures.

The EYFS lead will be responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff members read and implement this policy.
- Ensuring all staff are up to date with current statutory and Ofsted expectations.
- Supporting the school's ethos and vision and promoting high levels of achievement in the early years stage.
- Leading the EYFS team in planning and delivering a creative and stimulating curriculum based on the educational programmes of the EYFS statutory framework.
- Ensuring the educational provision and practice are based on the EYFS characteristics of effective teaching and learning, support a range of learning needs, and develop children's independence.
- Taking responsibility for high-quality teaching and provision throughout the early years stage.
- Ensuring the requirements of the EYFS, including assessment arrangements, are met in line with statutory requirements.
- Monitoring the progress of children and reporting evaluated data to the headteacher.
- Developing and maintaining effective relationships with parents, colleagues, the governing board, and the local community.
- Ensuring parents are informed about their child's progress, development, and targets, and are aware of relevant early years policies, practices, and procedures.
- Supporting staff development by identifying and/or providing regular training and CPD opportunities.
- Providing regular 1:1 meetings with staff to support professional development.
- Assigning a key person to support the needs of each child and family.

The key person (at Radwinter this is the class teacher) will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that the children they support receive learning tailored to their needs.
- Engaging with parents to support them in guiding their child's development at home.
- Helping families access more specialist support where required.
- Helping children become familiar with the school and acting as a point of contact for children and their parents.

All teaching staff will be responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Understanding and acting within the statutory frameworks that set out their professional duties and responsibilities.
- Ensuring they have a thorough working knowledge of:
 - the current EYFS statutory framework
 - the current EYFS Profile Handbook
 - the current EYFS assessment and reporting arrangements
- Using formative and summative assessment to assess, monitor, and report on children's progress, plan next steps, and shape learning opportunities.
- Identifying any areas of concern relating to children and their learning, development, and emotional needs.

3. Learning and development

In partnership with parents, the school will promote the learning and development of children to ensure they learn and develop well, are kept healthy and safe, and have the knowledge and skills they need to start school.

How will children be taught?

Our learning environment is carefully designed to be engaging, inclusive, and responsive to children's needs and interests, providing rich opportunities for exploration, play, and discovery. Children develop their

physical skills through active play, including outdoor learning in all weathers, and benefit from exploratory sensory experiences in the mud kitchen, sandpit, and Forest School sessions. The environment is adaptable and reflects children's progression, enabling them to work together, manage their feelings, and ask questions through skilled adult-facilitated play.

The curriculum is delivered through topics enriched by classroom enhancements, trips, and visitors, and is supported by high-quality key texts chosen to promote children's speech, language, and communication development. Planning remains flexible and responsive so that it can be adapted in line with children's interests and needs.

We value strong parental partnerships and work closely with parents to support learning at home. Parents receive knowledge organisers each half term and use Tapestry to share and celebrate learning from home.

Children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals is assessed through ongoing observation and professional knowledge, and this information is used to inform planning and next steps throughout the year.

Curriculum planning

Provision and practice within the early years will be centred around the requirements of the EYFS statutory framework. The EYFS framework outlines seven areas of learning and development that shape educational programmes in the early years. These are categorised as prime areas and specific areas.

Prime areas

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social, and emotional development

Specific areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The school will plan and provide educational programmes that involve activities and experiences for children across all seven areas of learning.

When planning the early years curriculum, practitioners will:

- Consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development.
- Stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.
- Reflect on the different rates at which children develop and adjust their practice appropriately.
- If a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, discuss this with the child's parents and agree how to support the child. Staff will also consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability that requires specialist support.

For children whose home language is not English, all staff working within the EYFS classroom will:

- Take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting language development at home.
- Ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English during the EYFS, so that children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin Year 1.

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

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

How we develop our Christian ethos within EYFS

At Radwinter, we believe deeply in our values by living them every day. We develop strong relationships with all members of our school community and always reflect on our values when working through conflict. We celebrate the ways in which our values are lived out every day in our school community through our Values in Action certificates during Friday collective worship.

Health, Well-being, and Healthy Eating

Children are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through nutritious meals, dental health awareness, and daily physical activity. Staff supervise all eating times to ensure safety, good hygiene, and positive social interaction in accordance with the school's food and drink policies.

Play is carefully managed to reinforce respect for resources and global awareness of hunger and poverty.

EYFS (2025) Safer Eating

The new Safer Eating regulations, 3.63 – 3.70, sit within the Food and Drink section. They appear on pages 27-28 in the EYFS Statutory Framework for Childminders and on pages 36-37 in the EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School based providers.

The measures included in this section are:

- At any time when children are eating, a paediatric first aid (PFA) trained member of staff must be present.
- Before the child enters the setting, information must be gathered about special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances and other health requirements. All staff must have access to this information, and each child should have a nominated staff member responsible for checking any food and drink offered is safe for them to eat.
- Children must be closely observed, facing if possible to react quickly in the case of choking or allergic reaction.
- Any choking incidents must be recorded and the parents / carers must be made aware. Review records of any near miss incidents or accidents often to identify any patterns or common issues that need to be addressed.

What will the outcome for children be?

Our curriculum and its delivery ensure that children, from their own starting points, make strong progress. During their time with us, children make rapid progress towards the national expectations for a good level of development at the end of the year. Children also make good progress towards their age-related expectations both academically and socially, developing a sense of themselves before transitioning into Year 1.

Children develop their characteristics of learning and are able to apply their knowledge to a range of situations, making links and explaining their ideas and understanding. Children are confident to take risks and discuss their successes and failures with peers and adults, drawing on their experiences to improve what they are doing. By actively promoting our school values, children learn to live them.

We believe our high standards are due to our carefully planned environment, enriched play-based curriculum, quality first teaching, and the rigour of assessment.

4. Assessment

Assessment

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

In line with statutory requirements, the school will undertake summative assessment of each child's development at certain stages.

These are:

- **Reception Baseline Assessment** - a short assessment taken within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception, regardless of when in the school year this occurs
- **EYFS Profile** - a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding, abilities, attainment against the Early Learning Goals, and readiness for Year 1

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

Parents will be kept up to date with their child's progress and development through informal discussions and parent consultations. Across the year, the EYFS lead will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents.

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

When undertaking assessment activities, all staff members will have due regard to the school's Early Years Assessment Policy, any advice from the local authority, and the current EYFS Profile Handbook and Assessment and Reporting Arrangements for that year.

5. Inclusion

All children will be valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability, or gender. The school's Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will ensure that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

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

The 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.

6. The Learning Environment

The school recognises that the physical and emotional environment plays a crucial role in supporting, enabling, and extending children's learning and development. The continuous provision environment has been carefully developed to support all children's learning and development. Enhancements are carefully chosen to support, develop, and extend learning.

The school will provide a safe, welcoming, warm, and stimulating environment that values active learning, exploration, and play, where children feel free to be inspired, create, make links, and develop critical thinking skills.

All EYFS staff will ensure that learning environments are well organised and suitable for group, individual, and whole class learning, with interactive displays and easily accessible resources used to encourage independence.

Children will have access to indoor and outdoor learning environments. Staff will plan provision to ensure that there are a range of learning opportunities available, and that the learning opportunities available in the outdoor environment build on and develop those inside.

Independent learning will be encouraged through planned continuous provision where children can make their own selection from a variety of resourced areas.

Staff will support children to navigate and access the learning environment, intervening and interacting where necessary to ensure that all learning opportunities and teaching moments are captured and capitalised upon.

Appropriate and stimulating educational visits and visitors, from both within and outside of the local community, will be arranged to further expand children's learning experiences.

7. Safeguarding and Welfare

The school will take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well and will comply with the requirements of the EYFS statutory framework to:

- safeguard children
- ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children
- promote good health
- manage behaviour
- maintain records, policies, and procedures

Child protection

Staff will be alert to any issues of concern in a child's life at home or elsewhere. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS will be required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

The DSL is Emily Bartram, Headteacher. The deputy DSLs are Pippa Hibbs and Gaetanne Fuller, Assistant Headteacher. Our Safeguarding Governor is Sarah Abbott.

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 DSLs 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.

The school will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse of children by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises, where required to do so.

Staff suitability

The school will ensure that all adults who work with children are suitable to do so and that appropriate checks are completed in line with safer recruitment and safeguarding requirements

Behaviour

Children's behaviour will be supported through positive relationships, clear routines, and age-appropriate expectations. Staff will help children to understand boundaries in a calm and consistent way.

From 1 September 2026, the school has regard to the Department for Education's guidance on children's screen use in early years settings. Screen use in Reception is limited, carefully planned, age-appropriate and linked to a clear learning, communication or accessibility purpose. Children do not access screen content without adult oversight, and screens do not replace high-quality interaction, practical play, stories, physical activity or outdoor learning. Appropriate assistive technology for pupils with SEND is considered according to individual need.

The school's safeguarding arrangements set out how mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging or sharing capabilities may be used. Digital content is checked before use; advertising, autoplay, algorithm-driven content and unsuitable artificial intelligence tools are avoided in Reception.

The school follows the safer-recruitment and suitability requirements in the EYFS framework and Keeping Children Safe in Education. Staff and regular volunteers working directly with Reception children must have the appropriate identity, reference, enhanced DBS and, where eligible, children's barred-list checks before starting. Occasional supervised helpers are managed through the school's risk-assessment and volunteer procedures. Staff and prospective staff must disclose relevant information that may affect their suitability, subject to the legal rules on protected convictions and cautions.

Banned dog breeds within section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, including the XL Bully type, must not be kept or present on the school premises at any time, including where a dog has a certificate of exemption.

The detailed safer-sleep requirements for children under two are not applicable because the school provides Reception provision only. If a Reception pupil needs to rest or sleep because of a medical condition, disability or other identified need, an individual plan and risk assessment will specify safe supervision and care arrangements.

When Reception pupils attend school-run breakfast or after-school care, the safeguarding and welfare requirements in section 3 of the EYFS framework continue to apply. The learning, development and assessment requirements in sections 1 and 2 do not apply to wraparound-only care for children who normally attend Reception or an older class during the school day.

Further EYFS Framework updates from September 2026 include and will be strictly adhered to:

- **Safer Sleep Monitoring:** Staff must maintain constant visual and audible monitoring of sleeping children. Children must **never** be left sleeping out of sight or hearing.
- **Lowered Reporting Threshold:** Staff must immediately report any allegation of "harm" (lowered from "serious harm") regarding anyone living or working on the premises.
- **Mealtime Safety:** Rigid protocols exist for active mealtime supervision and cutting food (e.g., grapes/cherry tomatoes lengthwise) to prevent choking.
- **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA):** Practitioners must pair dual devices securely following updated digital authentication rules in the 2026 RBAARA.

Further safeguarding and welfare procedures, including child protection, allegations against staff, whistleblowing, online safety, safer recruitment and staff conduct, are set out in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and associated procedures.

8. Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment

Safety

The school will:

- ensure that its premises, both indoor and outdoor, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children cared for and the activities provided
- comply with health and safety legislation

- have an emergency evacuation procedure
- take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children and others on the premises in the event of an emergency
- have appropriate fire detection and control equipment which is in working order, such as fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire blankets, and fire extinguishers
- ensure that fire exits are clearly identifiable and that fire doors are free from obstruction and easily opened from the inside

Premises and equipment

The school will:

- ensure premises and equipment are organised in a way that meets the needs of children and adheres to the relevant indoor space requirements as outlined in the EYFS statutory framework
- provide access to an outdoor play area or, if this is not possible, ensure that outdoor activities are planned and taken daily
- follow its legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, including the provision of reasonable adjustments
- ensure there are an adequate number of toilets and hand basins available
- ensure there is an area where staff may speak to parents confidentially
- only release children into the care of individuals who have been notified to the school by the parent or carer
- ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised

Risk assessment

The school will:

- take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children are not exposed to risks and be able to demonstrate how risks are being managed
- determine where it is helpful to make written risk assessments in relation to specific issues, to inform staff practice and demonstrate how risks are managed if required by parents or inspectors

Outings

The school will:

- keep children safe on outings
- assess the risks or hazards which may arise and identify the steps to be taken to remove, minimise, and manage them
- make a judgement about whether the risk assessment needs to be in writing
- ensure that adult-to-child ratios are considered in any risk assessment
- ensure that vehicles used to transport children, and the driver of those vehicles, are adequately insured

The Health and Safety Policy outlines the full health and safety procedures. The school also has a Fire Safety Policy in place.

9. Parental involvement

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

Parents will be invited to termly parents' evenings; however, the school has an open-door policy and parents are welcome to talk to staff at the start and end of the school day, send an email to the class email address, or arrange a confidential discussion as needed.

Topic knowledge organisers and newsletters are sent home at the beginning of each half term to help parents and carers understand what children are learning and how they can support this at home.

We use Tapestry, a secure online learning journey platform, to share information and sometimes, key moments in a child's learning. Parents are also encouraged to share learning and events from home.

Reading books are changed every Friday along with a phonics sheet and reading for pleasure book.

10. Transition

Transition into Reception

We work closely with local nurseries, childminders, and parents to ensure a happy and successful start to school. Our transition programme includes:

- home visits before starting school
- visits to children in their nursery or childminding setting
- stay-and-play sessions where children visit our school with their parents
- two transition sessions in school, one including lunch
- a dedicated transition workshop for parents to explain routines, expectations, and how to support their child's start to school

Transition into Year 1

We collaborate closely with Year 1 staff to ensure a smooth progression, with all staff familiar with each child's needs and abilities. Our approach includes:

- opportunities for children to meet wider Year 1 staff and build positive relationships
- transition sessions in Year 1 to familiarise children with their new classroom and routines
- a transition into Year 1 workshop for parents to understand Key Stage 1 expectations and develop strong partnerships with Year 1 staff

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.

During the autumn term, the Reception teacher will meet again with the Year 1 teacher to discuss the children further.

The Reception teacher and Year 1 teacher will continue their dialogue throughout the year the children have entered Year 1, particularly for children still working within the EYFS.

Our transition programme ensures children feel confident, secure, and ready to flourish in the next stage of their education.

11. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing board 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.