



## Teaching and Learning Policy

The purpose of this policy is to make explicit St Giles Nursery School and St Giles Nursery School Pre2s, *philosophy* and *pedagogy*. The Policy will endeavour to explain how different aspects of the nursery support learning, development and care. It will describe how Educators provide high quality teaching and learning experiences to make learning meaningful and purposeful.

*“Studies into the development of the brain suggest that the new-born and infant child have enormous latent capacity. The extent to which these are encouraged in the first years of life has a crucial bearing on the development of the brain itself. This is not a matter of capacity but of exposure. If these capacities are not exercised, the neurological patterning, the hard wiring of the brain, is allocated to other purposes.... Because early development provides a foundation for all subsequent learning, opportunities lost in the early years of life are difficult if not impossible to regain. Consequently, the nature of early year’s education is as important as the fact of it. In our terms, it is particularly important in the early years to encourage imaginative play and discovery learning as essential processes of intellectual, social and emotional development.”* Sir Ken Robinson

At St Giles Nursery School we believe that young children are developing more rapidly, intellectually, physically and socially, than at any subsequent stage in life. This growth is very individual and children vary greatly in their maturity in different areas of development. At St Giles Nursery School we aim to ensure that their educational and childcare experiences are designed to take account of individual achievements and needs.

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”* EYFS Statutory Framework Statutory Framework for the EYFS DfE 2024

We believe that parents/carers are the first and most enduring educators who have the most impact on their child’s life and education. Therefore, we work in partnership with parents to seek their perspective of their child to inform planning a meaningful and purposeful curriculum based on the interests and strengths of their children.

We value the process of learning and understand that young children have the right to communicate and explore their learning in many different ways. Above all we believe that learning is ‘learnable’, and strive to support children to develop specific learning capacities which will enable them to be effective lifelong learners.

Learning happens best when it exercises and challenges the learner’s capacities as they emerge at a given developmental level; when it encourages them to develop skills to be independent and have the knowledge of applying these skills to achieve a goal or outcome. Young children need time and space to become resilient lifelong learners.

Teaching and learning at St Giles Nursery School is seen through the ethos;

**BELONG      EXPLORE      ACHIEVE**

St Giles Nursery School provides

*Excellence in Early Years Education and Care*

Through:

- A wonderful environment where children can explore, discover and learn.
- Enriching the mind through quality interactions with adults and planned learning through play.
- Strengthening children, families and communities to develop learning for life.

## Children's Rights: Entitlement

**Article 3: The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.**

**Article 12: Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.**

**Article 28: Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Secondary education must be available for every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.**

**Article 29: Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.**

We believe that children are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum that builds on the particular interests and skills of each child, giving them a positive image of themselves. We are committed to the promotion of justice and racial equality through the establishment of a strong multi-cultural perspective in our activities. We wish to prepare all our pupils for life in a multi-cultural society, building upon the strengths of cultural diversity. Our philosophy is to have a positive outlook on gender, race, additional educational needs and discipline. We take particular care to ensure that resources materials reflect the society around us. We also wish to eliminate stereotyping and bias in resources and our own practice.

### **Intent**

We believe that in an effective Early Years Curriculum to ensure that; content, processes, concepts, skills and Knowledge all link across and throughout the curriculum. Early Years children are competent, skilful and active learners and that child-initiated, play-based activities should be at the heart of the process, promoting healthy social and emotional growth.

Our curriculum allows children to;

Have a positive image of themselves as a learner and valued member of a diverse community.

Be caring and understanding towards others.

Be confident to explore new experiences, language and knowledge and apply developing skills in a range of contexts.

Develop the ability to focus, remember and problem solve with information.

Be healthy and happy, with independence in their self-care and diet, enjoy outdoors and physical experiences.

We aim to ensure that the Early Years Curriculum is broad and balanced and tailored to meet the needs of all children to give them a positive image of themselves.

Ensure this Curriculum builds upon the effective practice, children's development and progress in the under threes' childcare provision.

Provide a learning environment that is warm, secure, happy and welcoming.

Arouse each child's curiosity so that they want to learn more and 'learn to learn.'

Nurture and build upon the natural energy, enthusiasm, curiosity and sense of humour of our children.

### **Being Intentional with Young Children**

- I Interactions**
  - ✓ Respectful and secure relationships.
  - ✓ Respectful interactions
  - ✓ Primary caregiving
- N Nature**
  - ✓ "Earlier is not better" - Magda Gerber.
  - ✓ We appreciate nature's plan for each child, and allow it to unfold naturally.
  - ✓ Slowing down
- T Time**
  - ✓ Full attention during care times
  - ✓ Plenty of time for uninterrupted play
- E Environment**
  - ✓ Safe, calm, familiar, predictable, welcoming, engaging, intriguing
  - ✓ Room for free movement
  - ✓ Open ended passive resources
- N Nurture**
  - ✓ Caregiving is a valued part of the curriculum
- T Trust**
  - ✓ Children are trusted to be capable and involved learners
  - ✓ Children are given time to solve their own problems and challenges



## Teaching and Learning

We follow the **Early Years Foundation Stage**, statutory framework (updated 2025) that sets the standards for Learning, Development and Care for children from birth up to 5.

[EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)

The EYFS sets the standards that all early years' providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

Four guiding principles shape our practice:

**Unique Child**

**Positive Relationships**

**Enabling Environments**

**Learning and Development**

### **Children develop & learn in different ways and at different rates.**

St Giles Nursery School recognises all children as individual learners

To support professional understanding and provide continuity across the Nursery School and National context, we refer to both the Development Matters 2024 and the Birth to Five Matters 2021 to support our Curriculum Framework which is driven by our communities and families for our children.

[Development Matters - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Birth To 5 Matters – Guidance by the sector, for the sector](#) Alongside research evidence guidance (e.g., EEF).

Teaching and learning is based on the EYFS seven areas of learning and development, with three prime areas; Communication and Language Development, Personal Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development. The four specific subjects are; Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Art and Design. St Giles Nursery School places great emphasis upon learning through play. We explain our approach to parents through using Tapestry, leaflets and workshops throughout the year. We believe that it is important to provide children with a range of play experiences both free choice and adult directed, including small group structured group time sessions. The teaching approach can then be designed for the child; being aware of each child's individual needs, interests and preferred learning styles. Within the organisation of the day children are given freedom to make choices, develop and plan their ideas, to review and recall and to encounter and solve problems independently. The children are also introduced to new concepts and skills through group time sessions with a particular focus on Maths and communication, Language and Literacy during these times. These often provide the stimulus for further exploration during free choice play.

We also focus on the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**, this concept looks at learning across three main areas:

**Playing and Exploring** – engagement - Finding out and exploring, Playing with what they know, Being willing to 'have a go'.

**Active learning** – motivation - Being involved and concentrating, Keeping trying, Enjoying achieving what they set out to do.

**Creating and Thinking Critically** – thinking - Having their own ideas, Making links, Choosing ways to do things.

### **Individualised learning support**

St Giles Nursery School recognises some children with developmental delay or special educational need/ disability may require further support or an adapted curriculum to our Nursery Curriculum. (see SEND policy and OBS, ASS, planning overviews).

## The Role of the Teachers and Early Years Nursery Educators



Keeping it REAL ...

### **R**elationships

### **E**ffective Teaching

### **A**ctive Engagement & Interaction

### **L**earning

**All teachers and educators** have a secure understanding of child development and an awareness of age appropriate needs, behaviour and learning. Their role is embedded to support strong attachment and the development of self-regulation. They are attuned to individualised feelings, needs, fascination and lines of enquiry. Teachers and nursery educators are attentive to any patterns of play that may be emerging or reflecting and emotional need. Teachers enable young children to communicate in a variety of ways and value their first language and cultural heritage. They develop planning that is personalised, challenging but achievable and ensure quality interactions which scaffold and prompt thinking, building on children's interests, strengths and questions. Adults support children to become mastery learners, to ask questions, take and evaluate risks, develop resilience and have ownership for their learning

Teachers encourage and support children's interactions with other children and adults, modelling feelings, learning characteristics and 'researchful' learning. Early Years Nursery educators model language of learning and exploration of emotional well-being. We support this with the use of Makaton and a range of evidence-based visual support strategies.

All Early Years teachers are attentive to the components of Mastery Learning:

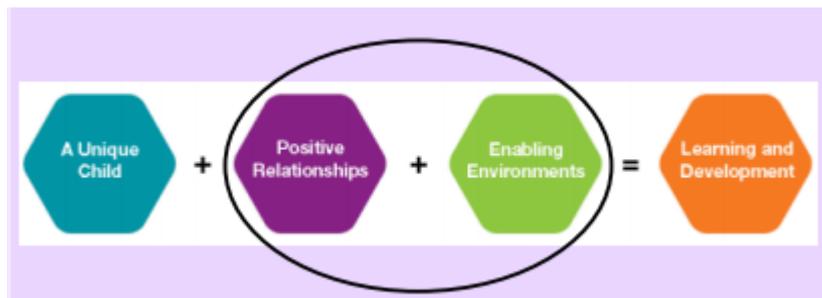
Pre-assessment, Sequenced teaching, Flexibility for practitioners, Monitoring of Progress, Additional support provided where required.

Teachers and nursery educators ensure the environment is safe, calm, purposeful, challenging and supportive. They provide inspiring learning experiences and provocations in which children can become the leaders.

### **Family Group and Key Person System**

Each child and family has a named key person who they will interact with daily, sharing information, interests, emotional well-being and learning. This offers the opportunity for a special relationship to develop. The key person builds a close relationship by acting as a champion for the child, assessing their needs and development, ensuring they feel safe and secure, develops positive relationships, are able to follow nursery rules and routines, are appropriately supported and understood. (Elfer, Goldschmeid, Selleck, 2003)

At St Giles Nursery School we strongly believe that creating a time to talk, sharing information, activities and experiences builds trust and partnership. The key person creates a team work approach between the child, parent and any professionals that need to be involved to support their learning journey at nursery. See SEND Policy, Behaviour Policy.



### **Baby-2-year-old Learning:** Putting Power into Play - The Caring Way

At St Giles Nursery School, we believe 'Feelings come first' and learning relies on emotions and feeling happy in our bodies.

St Giles Nursery School's ethos of 'Belonging, Exploring and Achieving' is crucial to effective learning and development with children under 2 years. Our attunement and attachment with the babies we care for ensures closeness and security underpins everything they explore and learn. Our staff team care and nurture the young children as they teach them.

Starting Smart: How Early Experiences Affect Brain Development (Zero to Three and the Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2000) describes how the trillions of neural connections babies are born with are selectively strengthened or pruned away in the early months and years of life.

It is important for our Nursery School to provide infants and toddlers with key early experiences before critical "windows of opportunity" close. (1001, first days).

Language development offers a good illustration of this. The number and variety of words that children hear by the time they reach age three is a significant predictor of later literacy development (Hart & Risley, 1999). We provide a carefully considered approach to vocabulary development and interactions.

Early environments and experiences have an exceptionally strong influence on the architecture and functioning of the brain. Different brain circuits mature at different points in development. "Experiences are critical for shaping higher level circuits," including the circuits that process communication signals (such as language and the emotions in facial expressions) and end much later in development. Because both the timing and content of early experiences are important, our school team who are responsible for the care and education of very young children should neither underestimate nor overestimate what their brains are capable of processing. In keeping with the latest knowledge derived from theory, research, and practice, our Curriculum is therefore organised around four areas that frame the timely and appropriate experiences that promote learning in all domains of development.

These 4 content areas are our approaches to learning;

#### **The Belonging Bubble:** social and emotional development

Children belong from the time they are born—and even before birth—to their family, culture, community and heritage. Belonging reminds us that relationships are the foundation for learning and living. Children learn about belonging as they participate in their families, in the community and in their Nursery experience.

The concept of belonging has at least three direct implications for practice:

Supporting children's belonging to their family, culture and community. Educators do this through their relationships and collaboration with children's families and through the conversations and learning opportunities they provide for children;

-recognising the central role of strong, positive relationships between educators and children as the foundation for all learning and development

-building a sense of belonging to the group, through conversations,

-learning opportunities and helping children learn to relate positively to each other and develop a sense of self.

Our Nursery wants to create a bubble with families which creates a warm nurturing relationship for the baby or infant. Staff are trained and experienced in 'tuning in' to babies.

**Somatic Strength, Space and Happiness:** physical development, health & wellbeing;

"Somatic" refers to the body-mind connection - the integration of thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations. Young children are developing their bodily sensations and can often sense when something isn't right. However, they may not have the words to express what they're feeling and demonstrate feeling content with their body when they do. Our nursery will be alert to children's non-verbal expressions and provide stimulating experiences to explore with our bodies. We will notice children's rhythms of alertness, hunger, thirst, toileting and tiredness and created relaxed and familiar routines. We will create stimulating experiences indoors and outdoors appropriate to children who are becoming mobile and inquisitive.

**Listening, Communicating and Looking:** communication, language, and literacy;

... babies are born already prepared to find other people interesting and worth communicating with from the start.' (Makin and Whitehead 2004, p.16)

Effective listening to babies entails respect and a belief that they are worth listening to. Listening is a two-way process which is not limited to the spoken word. It involves babies being active through sounds, movements and actions of many different kinds. Our Nursery educator team have the skills to interpret these. In daily encounters, they will make decisions informed by their observations and interactions with babies. They will decide, moment-by-moment, how best to provide for the babies they care for, sometimes getting involved, but at other times leaving babies content in their own explorations. Why is it important to listen to babies? Listening to babies helps to ensure that: they are valued and feel valued; they are responded to caringly and attentively; their physical, emotional and cognitive needs are met; their interests and experiences are developed in appropriate ways.

Being listened to plays a key role in developing babies as skilful communicators. Much is written about the importance of early interaction, which includes being listened to, and its impact on developing communication, language and literacy (Rich 2002).

Although babies cannot talk, they have no problem communicating and have little difficulty in letting those around them know what they want, how they feel or what interests them, without words. They are very skilled at it. Crying is commonly thought of as one of the key ways babies communicate. They cry for different reasons. Sometimes, to exercise their lungs and voice; at other times it may be to signal hunger, pain or even the memory or fear of pain. Sometimes babies might cry if they are sad. Crying might occur simply because it is enjoyable to make sounds and be in control. Exploring the world and wanting to be in control is natural for babies, especially as they grow older. This can lead to frustrated crying when the physical restrictions of simply being a baby limits what they can do and what they can get hold of, or when things they don't want are in their way. Leach (1997) records that some babies might be overstimulated by too many toys or people around them so they cry to register feelings, such as rage or frustration. Our team are alert and responsive to this and our relaxed environment complements a gentle, warm interaction.

Babies communicate how they feel, and what they want, to adults who 'tune in' with all their senses. They recognise all of their baby's actions and interpret these in order to respond in the best possible way. Listening adults follow what babies seem to be looking at and talk around this (Bruce 2004). They provide things for babies that are good to feel, to hold and touch, to taste, to look at and listen to. They try to see the world from the baby's perspective and tune in to the things that will stimulate, interest and engage them. Our educator team understand the importance of movement, steady beat, singing and rhythms to promote listening and interaction. Adults will sing, dance, talk and sign with children as part of their daily experience. Our listening adults will engage with babies as they: direct their talk to them; give babies choices; take turns in making sounds and actions with babies; respond to what babies show interest in and extend opportunities to look with focus; calmly and caringly acknowledge babies' emotions; sing a variety of songs to them, ranging from traditional lullabies from many cultures to pop songs from the charts; tell them stories; sing nursery rhymes and get babies involved in action songs; give commentaries on everyday actions; model how to be a listener and how to be a communicator; share toys and picture books with them; laugh and be close with their babies.

**Exploring and Remembering: Cognitive Development**

Babies are active thinkers and problem solvers. Beginning at birth the construction of thought processes, such as memory, problem solving, exploration of objects etc, is an important part of an infant's cognitive development. Our babies are enabled to interact with their environment and key adults, in order to learn. By using their senses, babies educate themselves about the world around them.

Our Nursery School values outdoor, unstructured "nature play," We understand how it supports babies to physically and intellectually explore the natural world as much as possible without the direction of their key people. We know that using your senses to explore outdoors is a powerful way of remembering and learning. The sensitive adults will provide daily opportunities to be in the outdoors.

Babies will have lots of opportunities to feel powerful as they learn. They will explore 'cause' and 'effect', feeling confident that they can make things happen! They will also remember when things are no longer visible and enjoy repeating play as they build their memory and recall. These experiences allow our youngest children to learn how to keep trying and feel a sense of accomplishment with a trusted and supportive adult.

**Building a team for our families:**

Establishing collaborative relationships with parents and carers is crucial to the life-long happiness and learning for our children.

A shared home and nursery curriculum is the most effective way of ensuring a child's development and learning is smooth and uncomplicated.

At St Giles Nursery School we encourage families to have active participation in our Nursery sessions, opportunities to talk with the team, communicate through tapestry and share ideas. We have specialist experienced staff who can offer support and guidance for families in their journey of parenthood.

We value diversity of our community and support a shared communication to ensure a child's holistic learning is supported. This includes family groups, routines, celebrations and experiences.

[9-12 months | Baby & toddler | NCT](#)

**Two year old learning**

In the 2 year old phase, our curriculum, with relation to Development Matters (2021), is used as a guide to provision and helps to shape practice for our youngest children. Experienced Educators plan a range of experiences which promote the holistic development of children as strong, skilful, competent and healthy learners. Well trained adults have a specialist knowledge of the needs and development of two-year-olds. Provision enables the recognition of schemas and detailed understanding of the Prime Areas.

Children are supported in small group learning by an adult who can meet their needs and support their interests. The adults observe children and use assessments to support regular summative reviews of children's progress and support the completion of the two-year-old check.

**Routines**

The daily routine is structured to include time for personal well-being, exploration, small group sessions (as appropriate), outdoor learning and social experiences.

The routine ensures time for children to repeat, revisit and reflect on their previous experiences, which includes a long, uninterrupted 'explore time' during which children can really 'get lost' in their learning; exploring, problem-solving and extending their thinking.

The routine is always consistent, ensuring children feel secure and are able to operate independently. Within the elements of the daily routine varied and enriching experiences are planned to maintain and stimulate children's attention and learning.

Children are emotionally supported in a small consistent group – their home base is supported with pictures displayed of their families or other significant people.

**Direct Teaching**

At specific times in the day the children will take part in a playful activity that is adult led. Such sessions include daily shared reading or storytelling, rhymes and songs and daily maths/counting experiences, as well as teaching

new skills to support their learning within the classroom environment, leading to daily phonics when children are ready to hear the sounds of the English language. All direct taught sessions are carefully planned and tailored for each group using previous assessments of the children's knowledge, skills and ability. Planning is changed and tailored regularly and, in response to the result of taught sessions, ensuring all teaching and learning is relevant and challenging for each child.

### Learning Through Play

The EYFS says that "Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play that is guided by adults."

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. Children learn best from activities and experiences that they have initiated and play with peers is important for children's development. We carefully plan our environment and provide opportunities to reflect these interests to inspire them further, whilst also making sure that children also have the opportunity to extend and practise the skills they have learned through direct teaching.

Opportunities are provided for children to be able to make their own decisions and choices in order that they can become independent, confident and happy learners.

Some children will need gentle encouragement in this step as they become comfortable in their new setting.

Through play, children explore and develop learning experiences, helping them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules.

Children at St Giles Nursery School soon recognise the rules and boundaries, making them feel secure. They see the high expectations have in every aspect of our day and delight in trying to meet these. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. They enjoy risk taking in a controlled and fun way. Our 'Forest School' experiences are prime examples of this.

Children and staff consistently use our '3BE's' approach to support a growing understanding of personal, social and emotional learning. (PSED policy).

Bruce identifies 12 "Features of Play":

1. Children use first hand experiences from life;
2. Children make up rules as they play in order to keep control.
3. Children symbolically represent as they play, making and adapting play props.
4. Children choose to play – they cannot be made to play.
5. Children rehearse their future in their role play.
6. Children sometimes play alone.
7. Children pretend when they play.
8. Children play with adults and other children cooperatively in pairs or groups.
9. Children have a personal play agenda, which may or may not be shared.
10. Children are deeply involved and difficult to distract from their deep learning as they wallow in their play and learning.
11. Children try out their most recently acquired skills and competences, as if celebrating what they know.
12. Children coordinate ideas and feelings and make sense of relationships with their families, friends and cultures.

BE  
CARING



BE SAFE



LISTENING  
TO  
OTHERS



Giving children the opportunity to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, allows them to discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. With adult support this process enhances children's ability to think critically and ask questions. Adults can support them in making connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning. Children have the choice to be outside during the entire session, unless there are exceptional weather conditions.

Teachers encourage children to explore and generate ideas and develop their imagination by using scaffolded interactions or open questions (sustained shared thinking) to support children to build on their previous or current

knowledge. We understand that children can contribute to peer learning. Teachers will also plan activities to be carried out in groups which will also help to develop key personal, social and emotional skills such as respect, understanding own impact in others, developing empathy, listening to each other, team working, turn taking and eventually sharing.

Teachers will often revisit experiences, events, concepts, stories and songs in order to refresh the child's knowledge, recall and build on this. (Spiral Curriculum Approach)

## Environments

The environment is organised into many different areas and the children have access to all areas during the session(s). We aim to build up each area as a rich resource base that will give children opportunities to develop their learning in many areas of the curriculum. We regularly review the position and organisation of each area in order to ensure that children are accessing the area and best use is made of the space available within the nursery.

The resources and planned opportunities for learning are considered as a curriculum framework. The skills and knowledge are planned across the nursery to ensure a spiral approach the provision. This is inclusive to children joining nursery at different times, for ages and stages and children's individual needs and interests.

The areas include:

### 2s & Under space

**Flowerpot Room-** Block play and construction, small world, jigsaws, home role-play, playdough, books, stories, mark making, water/sand atelier, treasure baskets/schema play, cosy sleep space and snack space.

### 2-3 year-old learning areas

**Garden Room-Room 1** Large block play and construction, small world, jigsaws, home role-play, playdough, books, stories and snuggle space, schema play.

#### Opening to-

**Room 2** Painting, water atelier, sand, mark-making, sensory tray and snack dining area.

**Explorers' Room-Room 1** Block and construction play, small world, music and dance, mark-making, books, exploring area, snack and lunchtime space.

#### Opening to-

**Room 2** role-play, playdough, painting and sand/water atelier, mark making,

**Up And away room** Quiet space, sensory provision and sleep space.

## Castle Room

**Room1:** Large block play and construction, small world, writing, drawing, jigsaws and games, books, workshop area - Focus on: Maths, C&L, Literacy, UW, PD, PSED.

**The Studio:** Painting, water atelier, messy sensory, collage, open role-play and imaginative personal space - Focus on: EAD, PSED, PD, UW, C&L, Maths.

**Room2:** Dry sensory and role-play; sand, range of sensory experiences, home role-play, malleable materials. Small construction and loose parts and mathematical space. Focus on: Maths, C&L, Literacy, UW, PD, PSED, EAD.

**Expressive Studio:** Music, drama, rhymes, singing and stories. Focus on: PSED, EAD, Maths, C&L, Literacy, UW, PD.

**The café:** Snack café, snuggle sofa with book, puzzles and games

Throughout both 2 year old learning areas, Explorers and the Nursery Learning Space are accessible drink stations, where children can access water and milk in the snack café.

Additional Learning Spaces used for all children are:

## Music & Movement Room–

Musical instruments, mats for yoga/movement and dance. Bubble machine and sensory lights,

Occasional Ball Pool, climbing frame, physical soft play, balance balls and equipment. Focus on: PSED, EAD, PD, C&L, EAD, MATHS.

**Kindness Cabin**– A natural Den space with cosy spaces to talk, share some learning or a book and a circular window looking down over our Forest School and St Giles Church: which gives us a sense of space.

## Outdoor Learning

Our outdoor learning policy aims to foster children’s love of learning. We believe that all children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. We further believe that it is important to enable children to use the outside environment as a context for learning.

Outdoor Learning is a broad term that includes: outdoor play [learning through play], school grounds projects, environmental education, recreational and adventure activities, personal and social development, and more.

Outdoor Learning does not have a clearly defined boundary but it does have a common core...

Outdoor learning can provide a dramatic contrast to the indoor classroom. There is strong evidence that good quality learning outside the classroom adds much value to classroom learning. It leads to a deeper understanding of concepts that span traditional subject boundaries and which are frequently difficult to teach effectively using classroom methods alone.

Direct experience outdoors is powerful, motivating and has impact and credibility. The results from outdoor learning can be instantaneous as well as active and therefore impact on behaviour as well as tapping into the learning styles of the more kinaesthetic learner. Through skilled teaching, outdoor experiences readily become a stimulating source of fascination, personal growth and can lead to breakthroughs in learning.

Active learning readily develops the learning skills of enquiry, experiment, feedback, reflection, review, communication, problem solving, an enterprising attitude and cooperative learning – to name only some of the benefits.

Outdoor Learning can help to bring learning alive. For that reason the outdoors can have an impact on areas of the curriculum as diverse as imaginative writing and personal and social development. Outdoor learning also provides experiential opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.

Benefits of Outdoor Learning:

- Outdoor learning helps to ensure that children are successful learn enabling children to develop knowledge and skills in ways that add v. to their everyday learning experiences.

- Outdoor learning enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon young children’s attitudes beliefs and self-perceptions, promoting children’s understanding of the importance of developing a Healthy lifestyle. it contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem and self-sufficiency.

Outdoor learning can have a positive impact upon children’s behaviour.

- Outdoor learning has a positive impact upon children’s personal an social development. It can also bring about community cohesion and allow children to develop as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to their wider community. It can create pride in the school and wider community and promote community involvement, renewing children’s pride and creating a sense of belonging and responsibility.

- It raises learners’ attainment, promotes and strengthens communication skills, teamwork and sense of cohesion.
- There is clear evidence that boys in particular are more active in their learning in an outdoor environment.



**Large Garden:** Large Sand, Big water, playground games, balance beam, climbing frame, sensory kitchen garden, mud kitchen, pebble pit, bike track, music, mini forest, playhouse and shelter, chatty space and reading hiding space, huge construction and den-making.

**Small Garden:** Large Sand, Big water, balance beam, small climbing frame, large climbing frame, platform and slide, mud kitchen, bike track, music, mini forest and hiding tunnel, chatty space and reading hiding space, playhouse, bumpy hills, climbing and swinging area, construction, and den-making.

## **Orchard Adventures and Forest School**

### **Our Forest School Vision**

To enable each child attending Forest School sessions to have the opportunity to develop an inquisitive and positive relationship with the natural world. We aim to increase confidence, self-esteem and respect in order to prepare children for an ever-changing world. We wish to give every child an opportunity to achieve their holistic potential.

Forest School sessions at St Giles Nursery School provides increasingly diverse opportunities for children to benefit from a supportive curriculum that can help them build positive values and attitudes about themselves, about learning and the environment in which they live. Children are invited to participate in challenging and achievable tasks that builds their confidence, skills and independence. They are given the time to thoroughly explore their thoughts, feelings and relationships. This time and reflective practice develops inter- and intra-personal skills, which are well-documented as being directly linked to learning skills.

No child can fail at Forest School; they all manage to take something positive from the experience.



Forest School is holistic learning through play and exploration. Children learn about the natural environment, how to handle risks and to use their own initiative to solve problems and cooperate with others.

Within each Learning Space we plan for a range of learning and teaching experiences across each of the seven areas of learning (EYFS). At St Giles Nursery School children are given opportunity to develop their own ideas, and to encounter and solve problems independently. Planning encourages this, stimulating the children's interest and imagination, offering many opportunities for talk between adult and child, and between child and child, providing for extended quiet activities, such as looking at books, listening to music, or observing the natural environment.

### **Progression in Learning across the Nursery School**

Long term planning provides a spiral provision of skills and knowledge that develops across the Nursery School. Children join Nursery across the year and children need time to revisit, rehearse and develop their recall of knowledge, skills and concepts. Spaces for learning, e.g. construction are considered and the skills and concepts that can be explored, taught and practiced within each phase are considered. This enables children to investigate, practice and develop new skills with familiar but evolving resources, ideas and knowledge.

Each phase within our Nursery School curriculum identifies targets for each term within each EYFS area, through Pupil Progress Meetings. These targets form the focus of flexible termly, weekly and daily planning.

We often plan to develop children's knowledge concept and skills through the use of projects, often initiated by the children themselves. Such learning always involves first hand experiences and activity, perhaps an expedition outside school and contact with visitors from the local community. Properly planned, this can be a powerful means of firing imagination and enthusiasm.

Our curriculum is child-centred promoting self-respect and a positive self-image. We also foster the necessary skills to enable individuals to play an effective part in building more just and peaceful relationships, encouraging co-operation and consideration towards others, plus responsibility for one's own behaviour (refer to Developing Positive Behaviours Policy, 2020, PSED Policy 2020).

The Nursery carefully considers the research-led approaches for teaching and learning and considers them within a progression appropriate for 6 months-4 year olds. Phase Leaders are engaged with EEF overviews and review these regularly for professional development and reflection for school development. Curriculum Areas of the EYFS are reflected on by the staff and leadership team ensuring current educational thinking and knowledge of how our children learn are at the heart of the curriculum we offer. Please see *Curriculum Policies & Overviews*.

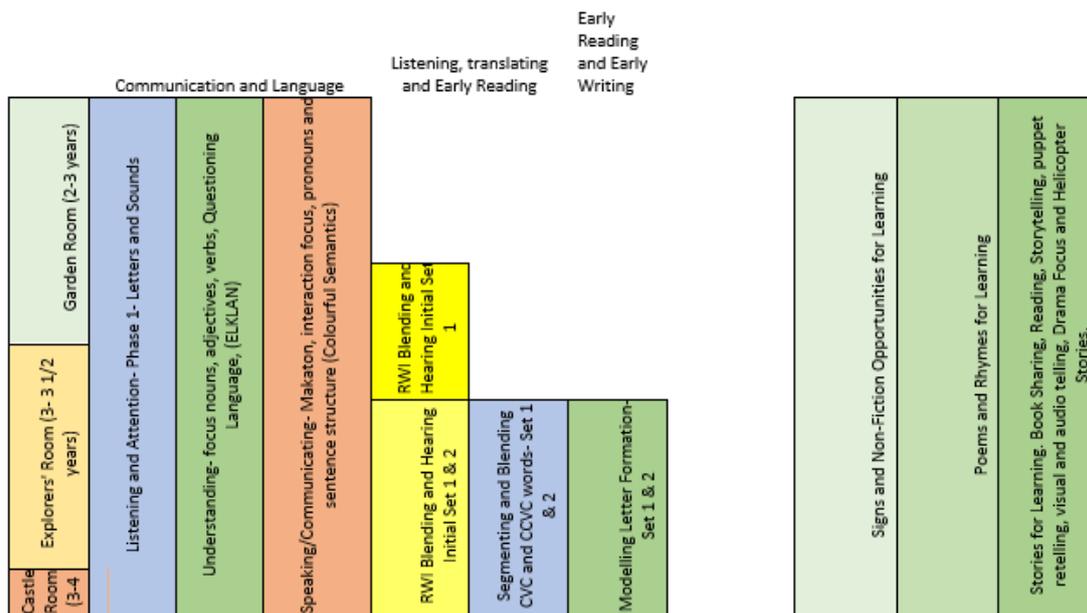
E.g. *Baby-2 year old Learning & Development*

	A	B	C
<p><b>The Belonging Bubble:</b></p> <p>Social &amp; emotional Development.</p>	<p>Express preferences and decisions with movements, gazing and verbalisation. They also try new things and start establishing their autonomy.</p> <p>Engage with others through gestures, gaze and talk.</p> <p>Feel confident when taken out around the local neighbourhood and enjoy exploring new places with their key person.</p> <p>Holds up arms to be picked up and cuddled and is soothed by physical touch such as being held, cuddled and stroked.</p> <p>Has an emerging awareness of other's play and interactions.</p>	<p>Find ways to calm themselves, through being calmed and comforted by their key person.</p> <p>Feel strong enough to express a range of emotions.</p> <p>Find ways of managing transitions, for example from their parent to key person.</p> <p>Thrive as they develop self-assurance.</p>	<p>Use that engagement to achieve a goal. For example, gesture towards their cup to say they want a drink.</p> <p>Develop friendships with other children. Engage alongside others with physical contact to express interaction.</p> <p>We will begin to explore boundaries and become aware of rules.</p> <p>Watch, follow and initiate others in simple play.</p>

E.g. *Communication into Literacy : 3-4 Years Curriculum Framework*

C&L	Social Communication	<p>I will tell another child in actions or simple words if I do or do not want them to do something.</p> <p>I am beginning to engage in conversation with an adult.</p> <p>I am beginning to initiate a conversation with my friends.</p> <p>I am beginning to initiate a conversation with an adult.</p> <p>I am beginning to initiate a conversation with my friends.</p> <p>I am beginning to use talk within my play</p>	<p>I can initiate a simple conversation with an adult.</p> <p>I can initiate a conversation with my friend.</p> <p>I can use talk to organise my play</p> <p>I will verbally tell another child if I want them to do something different.</p> <p>I can initiate a conversation with an adult which includes simple questions.</p> <p>I can initiate a conversation with my friend.</p>	<p>I will verbally tell another child if I want them to do something different.</p> <p>I can initiate a conversation with an adult which includes questions.</p> <p>I can use talk to organise my play with others</p> <p>I am developing confidence to explain my thinking in front of a small group of children.</p> <p>I can initiate a conversation with an adult which includes questions.</p> <p>I can use talk to organise my play with others.</p>	<p>Enjoy listening to longer stories and can remember much of what happens.</p> <p>Pay attention to more than one thing at a time, which can be difficult.</p> <p>Use a wider range of vocabulary.</p> <p>Understand a question or instruction that has two parts, such as: "Get your coat and wait at the door".</p> <p>Understand 'why' questions, like: "Why do you think the caterpillar got so fat?"</p> <p>Sing a large repertoire of songs.</p> <p>Know many rhymes, be able to talk about familiar books, and be able to tell a long story.</p> <p>Develop their communication but may continue to have problems with irregular tenses and plurals, such as 'swam' for 'ran', 'swapped' for 'swam'.</p> <p>Develop their pronunciation but may have problems saying: some sounds: r, j, th, ch and sh multi-syllabic words such as 'pterodactyl', 'planetarium' or 'hippopotamus'.</p>	
	Listening and Attention	<p>I am beginning to understand a simple instruction said to me e.g. 'sit down!'</p> <p>I can hear the difference between some sounds</p> <p>I can respond to some closed questions related to my immediate play (objects, actions).</p> <p>Blank Level 1 question examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find one like this. (Matching objects)</li> <li>What can you hear?</li> <li>What did you touch?</li> <li>What is this? (Pointing to object)</li> <li>Who is this? (Pointing to person)</li> <li>What is _____ doing?</li> <li>Say this "_____" (imitation)</li> <li>What did you see? (Remembering items in books)</li> </ul>	<p>I can sometimes follow instructions with 2-3 Information Carrying Words</p> <p>I can respond to some closed questions that are about things I know but aren't visible. Blank Level 2 question examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What happened?</li> <li>Who/what/where is _____? (Remembering information)</li> <li>Describe characteristics of objects: o E.g. What size/shape/colour is it? How does it taste/smell/feel?</li> <li>Identifying object functions: o E.g. Show me the one we use for _____.</li> <li>How are these different?</li> <li>Tell me something that is a type of _____ (Naming object from category)</li> </ul>	<p>I can stop and listen when asked by an adult</p> <p>I can hear the difference between a range of sounds</p> <p>I can respond to some closed and open questions that are about things I know but aren't visible. Blank Level 2 question examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What happened?</li> <li>Who/what/where is _____? (Remembering information)</li> <li>Describe characteristics of objects: o E.g. What size/shape/colour is it? How does it taste/smell/feel? Tell me about the_____.</li> <li>Identifying object functions: o E.g. Show me the one we use for _____.</li> <li>How are these different/the same/similar?</li> <li>Tell me something that is a type of _____ (Naming object from category)</li> </ul>	<p>I can sometimes follow instructions with 3-4 Information Carrying Words</p> <p>I can hear some sounds in words. (segmenting)</p> <p>I am beginning to think about 'why' events happen</p> <p>I can respond to some closed and open questions that are about things I know but aren't visible. Blank Level 2 question examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What will happen next?</li> <li>What happened?</li> <li>Who/what/where is _____? (Remembering information)</li> <li>Describe characteristics of objects: o E.g. What size/shape/colour is it? How does it taste/smell/feel? Tell me about the_____.</li> <li>Identifying object functions: o E.g. Show me the one we use for _____.</li> <li>How are these different/the same/similar?</li> <li>Tell me something that is a type of _____ (Naming object from category)</li> </ul>	<p>I can sometimes follow instructions with 3-4 Information Carrying Words</p> <p>I can hear a range of sounds in words. (segmenting)</p> <p>I can put some sounds together to make words (blending)</p> <p>I can respond to open questions that are about things I know but aren't visible. Level 3 question examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What will happen next?</li> <li>Tell me what you know about _____ (trees, frogs etc)</li> <li>Find one to use with this. (things that go together)</li> <li>Find the things that are not _____.</li> <li>What could he say? (Assuming the role of another person)</li> <li>How are these the same? (Identifying similarities)</li> </ul>
	Speech	<p>I am beginning to build my vocabulary with support from adults, props and real things</p> <p>I am enjoying using unfamiliar words</p> <p>I can repeat unfamiliar language from a book or talking tub</p> <p>I can enunciate some key sounds for speech</p>	<p>I am beginning to speak a full sentence with support from images or props</p> <p>I will repeat your modelled sentence (have a go)</p> <p>I can use some pronouns in my sentences.</p>	<p>I can enunciate most key sounds for speech as age appropriate</p> <p>I can use a range of adjectives to describe size, colour and movement.</p> <p>I will attempt to answer 'why' questions</p> <p>I will ask you 'why' when exploring things in play</p>	<p>I can use a range of adjectives to describe size, colour and movement.</p> <p>I am beginning to ask 'why?'</p>	<p>I am beginning to use tenses and plurals to extend my sentences, (but may get the irregular ones a bit muddled).</p> <p>I know several previously unfamiliar words (related to my current and previous learning focus) and can use them in context</p> <p>I know how to answer 'why' questions in context</p>

Integration of Language, phonics and early reading



Assessment, Reflection, Recording and Reporting of Progress

Assessment is an essential and important part of the Early Years for children’s learning and development.

St Giles Nursery Teaching Team are experts in child development and learning. The work closely with their key ‘family’ groups and are responsive and challenging to the children’s needs. Staff can talk confidently about the learning, progress, interests and next steps needed to ensure their children meet their potential in Nursery.

Assessment takes a variety of forms in order to gain an understanding of each child's level of understanding. These can be through observations, photographic evidence, examples of work, parental conversations and teacher knowledge. Formative assessment occurs throughout any taught session as well as during free flow times when children are embedding and extending any previous learning. These assessments will then be used to shape and adapt any future learning. Children are observed in depth for a week, once a term. This focus provides opportunities for reviewing the detail of their developing knowledge and skill, consideration for their engagement and well-being and opportunities to tailor the learning responsively to their needs.

Reflections of the impact of the provision, planned learning and engagement of children are crucial assessments of the effectiveness of teaching and learning. These can drive responsive change to meet the needs of individual children or groups.

Observations are taken using Tapestry App, which allows staff to take photos, videos and to make notes while observing what the children are doing or saying. From such observations we can consider the progression and learning directions to support the child. We are then able to share these experiences with the children's parents over the term. This is a two-way process whereby parents may input observations of their own, add comments to post and like observations they can view. As it is an app based 'Online Learning Journey', it is highly accessible as parents can access on mobile phones, tablets as well as on computers.

Opportunities for a Parent Teacher Consultation are provided twice a year, to provide information about children's progress and to discuss the children's learning journey from Tapestry, to talk about children's strengths, achievements, interests and next steps.

This cumulative information forms the basis for the monitoring of pupil progress as the children progress through school. Meetings are held termly to review children's progress. Specific planning is created for children who may not yet be at their developmental check point to ensure progress continues rapidly.

### Progress Check at age two

When a child is aged between two and three, teachers will review their progress, and provide parents and/or carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the Prime Areas (Personal and Social Development, Communication and Language, Physical Development.) The progress check identifies the child's strengths, and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. Teachers will create a report and will encourage parents to collaborate and formally discuss their child's progress check and support approaches to helping the child make progress.

The key person will spend enough time (e.g. an academic term or depending on the child's birthday) getting to know the child before carrying out the assessment. The report can be shared with the Health Visiting Team. Equally, if a family attends a Health Visiting check, Nursery values this information and would use this to inform the provision for the child and equally would encourage families to share the 2 year old check with the Health Team and other professionals working with the family.

- our knowledge of the child gained through observation and interaction
- our environment enables the child to flourish to their full capacity
- our assessments ensure a range of contributors e.g. parents, Speech and Language Therapy, outreach teachers and other relevant adults
- in-house moderation across the Early Years Phases
- moderation with the Local Authority Nursery School Partnership

## Induction and Transition

All children are offered a visit and home visit to ensure the family is confident about their child's nursery we also support attending our Toddler sessions.

All new starters have a flexible approach to joining Nursery. Each child has their own pace and we respect that, whilst supporting families to understand that we are familiar with the many different responses children have to joining a nursery.

Transition from our Garden- two year old room into Explorers is carefully planned to meet the needs of individual children as they settle and continue to learn in nursery class. They begin the year in the Garden room re-establishing their confidence and then gradually transition through the adjoining doors into the Explorers Room.

The children transitioning into the Castle Room visit many times in the summer term with their key person. They are introduced and play alongside their new key person. Parents are invited to a welcome meeting and are informed of all the opportunities and processes for their child.

In order to achieve and to ensure continuity when the child leaves Nursery, communication and liaison with the receiving primary schools is a high priority. Each child's individual Tapestry and other records are passed to the primary school and are discussed with the reception teacher wherever possible. Reception teachers and SENDCOs are invited into nursery to meet the children, observe them in the setting, and discuss work in their learning journeys.

### To ensure the best possible transition we:

- value the parent as the first educator of their child
- make contact with our feeder pre-school within our new intake to discuss essential information on every child
- share important information about our school during new-parents meeting
- use written information sent by pre-schools to inform early planning
- hold a series of 'welcome/taster' sessions for parents and children in June and July
- share information in a transition meeting(s) with key adults for children with additional needs
- meet with every parent and child before beginning school to share important information from home and school (wherever this is possible)

## Working with Parents and the Community

Good communication between families and nursery educators, not only helps to ensure a smooth transition, but also enables the nursery educators to learn about each child from the adults who know her/him best. The parent's first-hand knowledge of their child is invaluable in assisting teachers to understand and have a more complete picture. We aim to develop a two-way partnership that benefits the parent, child and practitioner. We believe that the educational process is at its most effective when there is a strong partnership between home and school and therefore we aim to involve parents as fully as possible in their child's learning.

## Parental Involvement

Parents and family members are welcomed into the nursery daily. Alongside this informal contact we have regular, subject-based workshops and curriculum workshops for parents to work with their child, We have a 'Children and Families Team', whom coordinate some of the parent workshops, home visits, nursery school celebrations, community events, supporting in facilitating the Toddler Sessions, Parenting programmes, Talking Tips etc and liaising with staff and parents to support the two-way partnership. We are committed to using the wider community including local businesses as a resource to enhance learning.

## Working with Professionals

We are part of the Lincolnshire Nursery Schools Partnership, LEAD, Penn Green and Derbyshire Stronger Practice Hub, working closely with other early years settings, children’s centres, local academies, schools and local universities. This supports continuity and progression for children and families and a coordinated approach to many aspects of school life. We work with a vast range of **External Support Services**, working hard to maintain the close links we have with our Health Visitor, Speech and Language Therapist, and Educational Psychologist etc. Further details can be found on St Giles Nursery School’s Website, our SEND Policy (2023), Local Offer and Developing Positive Behaviours Policy. We have links with other agencies including Multi Agency Safeguarding Team, Early Help Team, and other health professionals as appropriate. We believe that multi-agency responses to children and families can meet needs in a holistic way, can promote a joint approach to planning and delivering services and can make the best use of resources. Our practice reflects the ‘Team Around The Child Approach’ and we use the Common Assessment Framework to support our multiagency working. See also the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and Practice Guidance

## Promoting British Values at St Giles Nursery School

**The Rule of Law** - To learn routines at nursery, to gain an understanding and adhere to expectations and boundaries.

**Individual Liberty** - Children have the option to choose any activities or resources in the indoor and outdoor environments. Open-ended resources mean that children can shape their development through their own interests; we celebrate the uniqueness of all children.

**Democracy** - we have a focus in the Castle room where children become a *UNICEF 'Magical Group'*- called the *St Giles' Rainbows*, to actively involve children in making decisions that affect them at nursery, sharing ideas and experiences.\* Children are listened to in a variety of ways and have active roles in decision-making and planning of activities, Children and families become part of the St Giles community.

\*This group is currently under development. <http://www.unicef.org/magic/briefing/oslo.html>

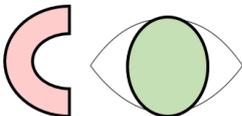
**Different Faith and Beliefs** – At our nursery we value ‘embracing those of different faiths and beliefs.’ Having a staff team who provide positive images reflecting the cultural diversity of Great Britain. Our resources reflect multicultural, multi-faith Britain and we positively celebrate our similarities and differences through celebrating meaningful festivals and events.

**Mutual Respect** - Listening to each other’s ideas and experiences in everything we do, learning to share, take turns and play co-operatively, using Conflict Resolution (Behaviour Policy) to understand feelings and behaviour, focussing on developing empathy and understanding of feelings, Understanding that all children have individual needs (SEND Policy, 2019), using Makaton signs to reinforce meaning, learning resources and routines such as our ‘3 Be’s for learning’ e.g. <http://www.temple-hill.kent.sch.uk/makaton-signs-1/>



Be safe


Be caring


Be a good listener


**SMILE:**

**Self regulation** - we help the children to understand how to express their feelings in an age appropriate way

**Manners** - we encourage children to say 'please' and 'thank you' and use important social skills

**Independence** - we support the children to make their own decisions and choices and understand that their actions result in consequences, appropriate to their stage of development

**Listen & respect** - children are taught the importance of listening as a skill but also as a mark of respect

**Encourage others** - we teach the children that encouragement is a far greater motivator than criticism and model how to encourage in different situations

Understanding the expectations & routine is key.

**NOW.... we are going to**

**NEXT.... we will**

Visual prompts make this clear to everyone

## **Being Part of Our Community**

In our Nursery School, we take pride in our locality, our City and our Region. The children are actively involved in exploring the geography and people that make our daily lives richer.

We have a strong relationship with our local Churches; providing termly festival and engagement activities.

Our children are involved in locality gardening and growing, visiting the local park, celebrating the majesty of the Cathedral quarter, and understanding cultural expectations when visiting local shops and eating places.

We value the closeness we have with the local Primary Academies and outside the pandemic have visited for events and shared experiences such as our Fun Walk, Festive Fayres, joint visits etc.

We use our 'big buggies' to get us out into the community and staff invest much time contacting and preparing to engage with annual events as they arise.

Adopted by Governing Body: January 2026

Review Date: January 2027