

# St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School and Nursery



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2021

The Federation of St Cuthbert's & St Sebastian's Catholic Primary Schools

# St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School and Nursery

## Our Mission Statement



We the pupils, parents, and staff of St Cuthbert's strive to create a caring, educational community where; Christian principles and standards are upheld, each person is valued and the spiritual, aesthetic and moral growth of individuals, as well as their intellectual and physical needs are met.

In Love with Christ: Be the best I can. Be kind to one another. Amen <sup>2</sup>

## The Foundation Stage

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to reach their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use the early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.”*

**The EYFS is based upon four principles:**

- **A Unique Child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments**
- **Learning and Development**

### **A Unique Child**

At St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary & Nursery School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that all children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by engaging with others and at St Cuthbert's we praise, encourage, challenge and celebrate, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Inclusion**

In line with our whole school policy on inclusion, our curriculum ensures that all children will be able to access outstanding quality learning and we address issues of gender, disability, race and culture positively and without prejudice. All children and their families are valued within our school.

At St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary & Nursery School we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children.

We meet the needs of all our children through

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence

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- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on the children's learning needs
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively and identifying their 'Next Steps' of learning
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children are valued
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- Monitor children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

It is important that all children in St Cuthbert's are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and help them to understand how to 'stay safe'. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. The wellbeing of all our children in St Cuthbert's is paramount.

### **Welfare**

*"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when the children's individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with adults caring for them."*

At St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary & Nursery School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2021). eg. Child Protection/Suitable people/Staff qualifications/Staff: Child ratios/Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

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## **Positive Relationships**

At St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary & Nursery School we recognise that children learn to be strong independent learners from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with all our children and their families.

## **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. Here at St Cuthbert's we recognise the role that parents have played and their future role in educating their children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before they start in our school
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their new teacher and their peers before starting school during a 'transition' session which is organised as a teddy bear's picnic for the children.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school with the Headteacher and Early Years Staff
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in 2YO, F1 and F2 class and allowing free access to the children's 'learning.
- Operating an "open door policy" encourages parents to talk to the child's teacher or key-worker if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each half term at which the teacher/key-worker and the parent discuss the child's progress, showing what the child has achieved and identifying 'next steps of learning'. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourages collaboration between the child, school and parents: ie. 'Stay and Play', 'Shared Learning session' 'Christmas Productions' etc.
- Encourage parents/carers to listen to their child read each night and to make a comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary
- Encourage parents to participate and extend children's learning at home using the school Dojo and Google Classroom platform.

## **Enabling Environments**

At St Cuthbert's we aim to provide a broad and balanced '**play based curriculum**' which will enable each child to develop personally. Socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development.

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At St Cuthbert's we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support our children's learning through planned play activities and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves.

*"The early years are vital for shaping children's views and attitudes." Development Matters, 2021*

At St Cuthbert's we aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experiences. Activities are planned for both indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: role play, book corner, mark making area, maths area, creative, construction, malleable, sand, water, small world and puzzles and these areas are mirrored outdoors as well, with also climbing frame and natural area. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

The planning within the EYFS follow Long Term and Weekly Plans. These plans are used as a guide for weekly planning and can change depending on the needs of the children and their interests. We make regular assessments of the children's learning using photographic evidence, video or written observations and children's Interest Big Book. All evidence is recorded in the children's Evidence Me programme and is used to formally assess children through Development Matters in the EYFS 2021 Framework. St Cuthbert's uses the information gather support teachers to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about a child's development, and their readiness for year 1. Observation checkpoints can help us to notice whether a child is at risk of falling behind so we can make all the difference by acting quickly. By monitoring a child's progress closely, we make the right decisions about what sort of extra help is needed. Through sensitive dialogue with parents, carers, and guardians, we can understand the child better and offer helpful suggestions to support learning at home within the family.

### **Learning and Development**

At St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary & Nursery School we know that children deepen their understanding by playing, talking, observing, planning, questioning, experimenting, testing, repeating, reflecting and responding to adults and each other. Practitioners need to plan learning experiences of the highest quality, considering both children's needs and achievements and the range of learning experiences that will help them make progress. Well planned play is a key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge during the Foundation Stage, through the seven areas of learning." EYFS Guidelines"

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

These are the prime areas:

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

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At St Cuthbert's also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

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

## **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

We aim to promote self-esteem and a strong self-image by developing an inclusive ethos and providing opportunities for each child to become a valued member of the group. Constructive relationships with other children and adults are an imperative part of our work. The use of encouragement and praise, a listening ear and interested response to children's thoughts and ideas will develop positive attitudes to learning and an enthusiasm for knowledge. Through our nurturing environment, children are individually supported in developing confidence, autonomy and self-respect. They are encouraged to work and concentrate independently and also to take part in the life of the class, sharing and co-operating with other children and adults. Through activities, conversation and practical example, they learn acceptable ways to express their own feelings and to have respect for the feelings of others. All the children are given the opportunity, as appropriate, to take responsibility for themselves and also for the class.

## **Physical Development**

Our programme of work in the Foundation Stage is intended to improve physical skills in all forms – co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement. It is hoped through confidence in movement and manipulation, children will benefit from a positive self-image and confidence and realise the importance of being healthy and active. Consideration and extra support is always given to those children whose physical skills are less developed and we aim to ensure opportunities are appropriate for each individual according to their needs. A range of equipment both indoors and outdoors, allows the children to challenge and explore their own abilities and skills under adult supervision. At the same time children are supported in the development of the fine motor skills required to use tools, including pens and pencils, and to handle small objects with increasing control and precision.

## **Communication and Language**

We encourage communication skills in all forms – speaking and listening in a wide range of situations including discussions, talk during play, story times, instructing, negotiation opportunities, singing and role-play.

## **Literacy**

In both small and large groups, children are encouraged to extend their vocabulary and fluency by talking and listening, by hearing and responding to stories. Children are helped to understand that written symbols carry

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meaning, to be aware of the purpose of writing and to use drawn and written symbols for themselves and when ready, begin to read and write words and sentences using their phonic knowledge. A well-resourced book area gives every child the opportunity and encouragement to become familiar with books, able to handle them and be aware of their uses.

Nursery and Reception are introduced to a structured phonics programme called 'Read Write Inc'. Children learn the English alphabetic code: first they learn one way to read the 40+ sounds and blend these sounds into words, then learn to read the same sounds with alternative graphemes. The children write every day, rehearsing out loud what they want to say, before spelling the words using the graphemes and 'tricky' words they know. They practise handwriting every day: sitting at a table comfortably, they learn correct letter formation and how to join letters speedily and legibly. Children's composition (ideas, vocabulary and grammar) is developed by drawing on their own experiences and talking about the stories they read.

Children are encouraged to experiment with mark making and emergent writing through a wide range of activities – as well as the mark making area, mark making material are also found across others areas both indoor and outdoor.

### **Mathematics**

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, we understand it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes. In line with this, mathematics opportunities are provided in our Foundation Stage in a variety of ways, through independent and adult initiated play, interaction and opportunities in role-play, creative work, using malleable materials, sand and water, cookery, investigations, songs and rhymes and adult led structured learning opportunities.

### **Understanding the World**

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension. A safe and stimulating environment allows the children to explore and experiment with a range of natural materials. They learn to observe the features of objects and substances, recognising differences, patterns and similarities and to explore, share and record their findings. Children are assisted in exploring and

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understanding their environment, both within the class and the wider community. A range of safe and well maintained equipment enables children to extend their technological understanding, using simple tools and techniques as appropriate to achieve their intentions and to solve problems. As well as a specific natural area children have opportunities to focus on ways of using Computing to strengthen teaching and learning in the EYFS for example computers, programmable toys, smart boards, audio tapes, CDs and digital cameras.

### **Expressive Arts and Design**

*"Creativity is fundamental to the successful learning"* At St Cuthbert's we aim to offer a wide range of creative experiences in all areas of the curriculum to develop each individual's creative development in full. Children are encouraged to use a wider range of resources in order to express their own ideas and feelings to construct their individual responses to experiences in two and three dimensions. Art equipment including paint, glue, crayons as well as natural and discarded resources provides for open-ended exploration of colour, shape, and texture and the development of skills in painting, drawing and collage. In addition, creativity in movement, music and dance are offered on a regular basis and children are encouraged to think creatively in all other areas of learning- sand, water, malleable materials, small world, construction sets etc through sensitive intervention from an adult.

In line with all school policies and in the Foundation Stage, we make a commitment to "EVERY CHILD MATTERS". All staff constantly works towards a child's entitlement to being healthy, safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well-being through the work we are involved in with the children in school and the support we offer our parents.

### **Key Person Role**

We have a Key Person system in place which has proved to be extremely effective for all of the children and their families. Every child in nursery will have a Key Person. Your child will meet with their group regularly. During this time the children will be given the opportunity to reflect on their sessions work, share news, talk about special events that have happened, share a story or sing some songs/nursery rhymes. This also allows a smaller group of children to get to know each other better and also establish a closer relationship with their Key Person. If children have done something special or would like to share something parents are encouraged to speak to their child's Key Person who can share this at small group time.

Parents/carers have the opportunity throughout the year to meet with their child's Key Person to discuss their child's progress. If you wish to speak to your child's Key Person regarding something in particular please arrange an appointment through the office. We do also use ClassDojo, this is an app that parents/carers can download onto their phone and message their child's teacher directly. Further information on how to do this will be given is shared when their child starts nursery. The children call adults in the Foundation Unit by their first names.

### **Home/School Links**

We recognise the importance of fostering a good relationship between the school, and parents/carers and we continually strive to ensure good relations between both parties. We value parents/carers opinion, views and input as your child's first educator and think it best for all parties concerned if the lines of communication are open at all times. We therefore operate an 'open door policy' and suggest that if you do have any questions,

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queries or concerns, no matter how small, that you speak to a member of staff. We are always happy and willing to listen to parents/carers about any and all matters. Most issues can generally be dealt with by the Foundation staff however, if you have a complaint please contact Mrs C Bellis-Knox or Miss A Brough by phoning or writing to the school.

### What we do to promote good home/school relationships

**Newsletters** – A newsletter will be sent home every half term to keep parents/carers informed of any events, activities, inset days etc.

**School Website** – ([stcuthbertsliverpool.co.uk](http://stcuthbertsliverpool.co.uk)) The school website contains information of any upcoming events, holiday dates or recent activities pertaining to our school.

**ClassDojo app** - After each child has begun school, they are given a log in for our clasdojo app explaining how to access it on a mobile device e.g. phone. This has proven to be an excellent way for parents/carers to keep up to date with what's going on and it allows them to contact their class teacher directly. Teachers will strive to respond to any messages promptly however there may be a delay at times if they are teaching. They are only contactable during school hours, any messages sent outside of school hours will be answered during the next working day.



**St Cuthbert's Twitter Account** – @StCuthbertsPri on Twitter for up to date information and events happening daily in school. Parents/carers can download our school app for news, information, term dates, payments etc.

**Shared Learning Days** – From time to time parents/carers will be invited into the Unit to take part in 'shared learning days'. These days give the parents/carers the opportunity to observe firsthand what we do in the setting and allows them to 'share' in the learning experience with their child.

**Open evenings** – We allocate certain evenings during the term in which we invite parents/carers into the setting to peruse their child's work and have a one to one chat with the Foundation staff regarding their child's progress.

**Star of the Week** – If a child is nominated as our class 'Star of the Week' he/she will be invited to take our 'Star Teddy' home to their house for the weekend. We ask parents/carers to help their child to draw/write what they did with 'Star Teddy' at the weekend and their child will be invited to share their news with the rest of the group the following Monday.

## St. Cuthbert's Home Visit Policy

Childhood experiences lay the foundations for later life. Parenting has a critical impact on children's emotional, behavioural and educational development, and their health and wellbeing. The school works in partnership with parents to ensure positive outcomes for children and the first step in this partnership is to home visit every family prior to the child coming to nursery (Foundation 1).

Two members of staff from the Foundation Stage Unit will carry out these visits, one of whom will be your child's allocated key worker or SMT. Both members of staff will wear their I.D badges and carry a mobile phone left on throughout the visit, the number of which will be left in the school office. The safety of our staff is paramount and an informal risk assessment is carried out before entering the home of the family.

The address of the home visit is always left in the school diary located in the school office; also a member of the SMT (Senior Management Team) is aware of the visit taking place.

The key-worker or SMT will take along a Foundation 1 handbook and share any relevant information with the parents/carers, a home visit record sheet is completed during the home visit. The key worker will explain the settling in period with the parent and will find out the child's favourite toys, interests and any other relevant family background information.

A period of half an hour will be allocated to each home visit. As part of our induction to the Foundation Stage, a home visit is carried out, however if a home visit is unsuitable the parent will be invited to visit the nursery at a mutually agreed time to meet the child's key worker. An agreed start date is given at the visit and parents are asked to stay for one hour on this visit to complete all necessary paper work and contact details.

The Lead Practitioner (Jackie Hilton) may also carry out additional home visits throughout the year, to support families with varying needs (throughout the year). If these visits are undertaken, the necessary safeguarding procedures are put in place.

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### **Reviewing the Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the school policy review cycle. This may be brought forward at any time to reflect Local or National recommendations or changes to policy and guidance. We involve our stakeholders in policy development and make sure the EYFS Policy reflects our current working.

Policy Written: September 2021

Sent to the Governors (Curriculum and Safeguarding Committee): September 2021

Next Review: September 2022

Staff Responsible: Angela Brough

Statutory Review as per DfE: Annually