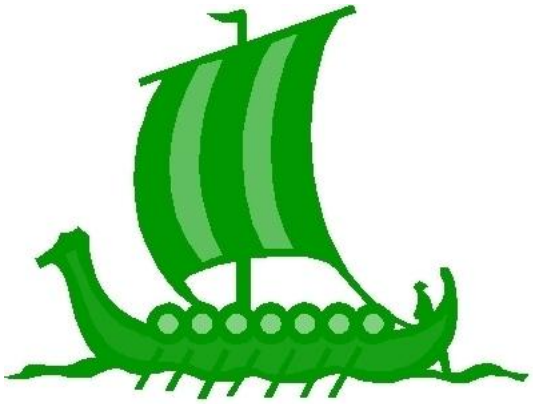


Wittersham Church of England
EYFS Policy 2026

We strive to cooperate and work alongside all members of our community to feel valued, nurtured, and empowered as they embark upon their journey to become the very best that God intended. Throughout their voyage of discovery with us, we ensure all children are provided with a rich curriculum and experiences that promote courage and a strong moral purpose underpinned by our Christian values, preparing them to become compassionate citizens within our rural community and the wider world.

Version	Date	By	Description
V01	September 2025	Stella Coulson	New Policy due to EYFS update
V02	September 2026	Stella Coulson	Updated to reflect EYFS Statutory Guidance 2026

1. Aims

This policy sets out how Wittersham Church of England Primary School implements the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to ensure:

- children access a broad, ambitious and balanced curriculum that provides a secure foundation for learning, development and future success;
- quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child is supported to make good progress;
- children experience a secure, safe and happy start to school;
- there is a close working partnership between practitioners, parents and carers;
- every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice;
- children with special educational needs and disabilities are identified and supported appropriately; and
- safeguarding, welfare, health and safety are central to all aspects of EYFS practice.

The EYFS is founded on the principle that all children deserve the care and support they need to have the best possible start in life. The statutory framework emphasises quality and consistency, secure foundations, partnership working and equality of opportunity.

Our approach reflects our Christian vision and values of courage, cooperation and compassion and our commitment to an ambitious, inclusive and nurturing start for every child.

2. Legislation and Statutory Framework

This policy is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, dated 13 July 2026 and effective from 1 September 2026.

The EYFS framework is mandatory for school-based early years providers in England.

The learning and development requirements and assessment arrangements have legal force under section 39(1)(a) of the Childcare Act 2006. The safeguarding and welfare requirements have legal force under section 39(1)(b).

The school also has regard to relevant statutory guidance and legislation including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- the Prevent duty;
- the Equality Act 2010;

- the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- relevant health and safety legislation; and
- other statutory duties applying to maintained schools.

3. Structure of the EYFS at Wittersham

Wittersham Church of England Primary School is a maintained primary school.

Our EYFS provision comprises Reception-aged children. We do not currently operate a school nursery.

Reception children have access to indoor and outdoor learning throughout the school day, with provision designed to support exploration, independence, purposeful play and adult-guided learning.

Where Reception-aged children attend before-school or after-school provision, safeguarding and welfare requirements continue to apply. The EYFS learning, development and assessment requirements do not have to be applied to wraparound provision solely serving Reception-age or older children.

4. Principles of the EYFS

Four guiding principles shape our practice:

- every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- children learn and develop well in enabling environments, with teaching and support from adults who respond to their interests and needs; and
- children develop and learn at different rates.

These principles apply to all children, including children with SEND.

5. Curriculum

Our Reception provision follows the statutory EYFS framework.

There are seven areas of learning and development.

The three prime areas are:

- communication and language;

- physical development; and
- personal, social and emotional development.

The four specific areas are:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world; and
- expressive arts and design.

All seven areas are important and interconnected.

Our curriculum reflects the statutory educational programmes and provides children with rich, meaningful experiences.

We recognise that communication and language underpin learning across the curriculum. Children experience a language-rich environment, high-quality interactions, stories, non-fiction, rhymes, poems and opportunities to develop and use new vocabulary.

Reading is central to our curriculum and children are supported to develop a lifelong love of books and stories.

Our curriculum provides frequent opportunities for practical mathematics, exploration of the natural and wider world, creativity, physical development, talk, imagination and purposeful play.

6. Planning and Teaching

Practitioners are ambitious for all children.

Planning takes account of:

- children's individual needs;
- interests and experiences;
- prior learning;
- different rates of development;
- SEND;
- language development;
- next steps in learning; and
- opportunities to develop independence and curiosity.

Where there are concerns about a child's development in a prime area, practitioners will

discuss these with parents and carers and agree appropriate support. Consideration will be given to whether additional or specialist support is required.

The EYFS does not prescribe one particular method of teaching. Children learn through a combination of:

- child-initiated play;
- adult-guided learning;
- direct teaching;
- modelling;
- observing others;
- discussion;
- exploration; and
- purposeful interaction.

Practitioners respond to children's emerging needs through warm, positive interactions and secure routines. As children progress through Reception, there is an increasing focus on the essential knowledge and skills that support successful transition into Key Stage 1.

7. Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

In planning and guiding children's learning, practitioners reflect on the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- playing and exploring – children investigate, experience things and 'have a go';
- active learning – children concentrate, persevere and enjoy achievements;
- creating and thinking critically – children develop ideas, make connections and develop strategies.

These characteristics are reflected across our continuous provision, adult-led learning and wider EYFS experiences.

8. Enabling Environment and Outdoor Learning

Our learning environment provides rich opportunities for:

- communication and conversation;
- high-quality texts;
- imaginative and purposeful play;
- creativity;
- physical development;

- mathematical exploration;
- problem-solving;
- independence;
- curiosity; and
- outdoor learning.

Children have daily access to outdoor learning wherever circumstances allow.

The statutory framework requires daily access to an outdoor play area or planned outdoor activities unless circumstances, such as unsafe weather, make this inappropriate.

Forest School experiences form part of our wider EYFS provision and support physical development, confidence, well-being, curiosity and children's understanding of the natural world.

9. Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning.

Practitioners use their knowledge of children, interactions, conversations, observations and information from parents and carers to understand:

- children's interests;
- what children know and understand;
- what children can do; and
- appropriate next steps.

Assessment should not result in practitioners spending long periods away from children or creating unnecessary paperwork.

Practitioners are not required to collect written, photographic or physical evidence to prove their professional judgements.

Parents and carers are kept informed of their child's development, and concerns or additional needs are addressed in partnership with families and relevant professionals.

Assessment also supports ongoing dialogue with Year 1 staff to ensure successful transition into Key Stage 1.

10. Reception Baseline Assessment

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is completed during the first six weeks in which a

child starts Reception.

The assessment is administered in accordance with the statutory requirements contained in Annex B of the EYFS framework.

11. Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

The EYFS Profile is completed in the final term of the academic year in which a child reaches five and no later than 30 June.

Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals and recorded as:

- expected; or
- emerging.

The Profile provides parents, carers, practitioners and Year 1 teachers with a rounded picture of each child's knowledge, understanding, abilities and readiness for Year 1.

Practitioners use their professional knowledge and judgement. Recorded, written or photographic evidence is not required to support each judgement.

12. Working with Parents and Carers

We recognise that children learn and develop most effectively when there is a strong partnership between school and home.

Each child has a named key person who:

- helps ensure care and learning meet the child's individual needs;
- supports the child to feel secure and settled;
- builds a relationship with parents and carers; and
- supports families to access specialist help where appropriate.

The statutory framework requires every child to be assigned a key person.

We communicate with parents and carers through meetings, reports, workshops, informal conversations and appropriate electronic communication.

We ask parents and carers to provide emergency contact information. Wherever possible, the school will hold at least two emergency contact numbers for each child.

Parents are provided with information about:

- how the EYFS is delivered;
- daily routines and learning experiences;
- learning at home;
- SEND support;
- food and drink;
- relevant policies and procedures;
- staffing arrangements;
- their child's key person; and
- how to contact the school in an emergency.

13. Safeguarding and Welfare

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure and have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.

We comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements in Section 3 of the EYFS framework.

Our overarching school policies apply fully to EYFS, including:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Whistleblowing;
- Behaviour;
- Health and Safety;
- Online Safety;
- Attendance;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions; and
- SEND.

The school's safeguarding policies include procedures for:

- concerns about children;
- allegations against staff;
- safer recruitment;
- safeguarding training; and
- the use of mobile phones, cameras and other devices capable of taking or sharing images.

14. Designated Safeguarding Lead

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead is the Headteacher, Mrs Stella Coulson.

The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and provides ongoing advice, support and guidance to staff.

The DSL undertakes safeguarding training consistent with Annex C of the statutory EYFS framework.

EYFS safeguarding training must include, amongst other matters:

- recognising abuse, harm and neglect;
- identifying early signs of concern;
- responding and recording concerns;
- making referrals;
- safeguarding legislation and professional responsibilities;
- inappropriate adult behaviour;
- domestic abuse and coercive control;
- female genital mutilation; and
- online safety.

DSL training must additionally cover organisational safeguarding culture, safer recruitment, managing allegations, local safeguarding procedures, escalation and internet safety.

15. Safeguarding Training

All practitioners receive safeguarding training consistent with Annex C of the EYFS framework.

Safeguarding training must be renewed at least every two years.

The school will consider the need for annual refresher training between full training cycles to ensure staff remain up to date with safeguarding procedures and emerging concerns.

Staff are supported to apply safeguarding procedures confidently in their day-to-day practice.

16. Whistleblowing

All staff, students and volunteers must know how to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice.

Our procedures clearly identify:

- how concerns should be raised;
- who concerns should be raised with;
- the process following a report; and
- external routes available where a staff member feels unable to raise concerns internally.

Concerns will be taken seriously.

Concerns relating to the Headteacher should be raised with the Chair of Governors.

The statutory EYFS framework specifically requires appropriate whistleblowing procedures for all staff, including students and volunteers.

17. Concerns About Children's Safety or Welfare

Where there is a concern about a child's safety or welfare, staff will follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where necessary, the local authority children's social care team will be contacted immediately in accordance with local procedures. In an emergency, the police will be contacted.

The school has regard to Working Together to Safeguard Children, Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Prevent duty.

18. Child Absence

We follow up unexplained or concerning absences promptly.

Where a child is absent without notification, staff will:

- contact parents or carers;
- use alternative emergency contacts where necessary;
- consider known attendance patterns and the child's individual circumstances;
- consider whether the absence may indicate a safeguarding concern; and
- make appropriate referrals or request a welfare check where necessary.

Our Attendance Policy provides further detail about reporting absences and the school's response to unexplained absence.

19. Safer Recruitment and Suitability

The school ensures that all people working with children are suitable for their role and have the appropriate qualifications, skills, training and checks.

From September 2026, enhanced DBS and barred-list requirements apply more widely to individuals aged 16 and over undertaking relevant work directly with children, including volunteers, subject to the limited statutory exception for occasional supervised volunteers.

No individual whose suitability has not been appropriately checked will have unsupervised access to children.

Additional checks will be considered for individuals who have lived or worked abroad.

The school maintains appropriate records of:

- identity checks;
- qualifications;
- DBS and barred-list checks;
- overseas checks where applicable;
- vetting;
- references; and
- relevant suitability information.

20. References

At least one written reference must be obtained for staff, students and volunteers before recruitment.

The school will:

- not accept open references;
- obtain references directly rather than relying on the applicant;
- obtain references from an appropriate employer, training provider or education setting;
- not accept references from family members;
- verify relevant previous employment;
- check that electronic references are from legitimate sources;
- follow up vague or insufficient information;
- compare references with application information; and
- resolve discrepancies before appointment.

References relating to previous work with children will be sought wherever applicable.

21. Staff Medication, Alcohol, Smoking and Vaping

Staff must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that may affect their ability to care safely for children.

Where medication may affect a practitioner's ability to care for children, medical advice should be sought.

Medication must be stored securely and out of children's reach.

Smoking is not permitted on the premises when children are present or about to be present.

Staff should not vape or use e-cigarettes when children are present or about to be present.

22. Staff Training, Support and Supervision

Staff receive appropriate induction covering:

- safeguarding;
- child protection;
- emergency procedures;
- health and safety;
- school policies;
- EYFS expectations; and
- their individual responsibilities.

Staff have access to appropriate professional development.

The school ensures that staff have sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to fulfil their roles effectively.

Appropriate supervision and support are provided to practitioners.

23. Staffing and Ratios

Staffing arrangements will always prioritise the safety, well-being and needs of children.

Reception classes in maintained schools are subject to infant class-size legislation and are normally limited to 30 pupils per school teacher during an ordinary teaching session.

Where Reception children are taught within mixed-age groups, staffing will be organised

with regard to all relevant statutory requirements and the individual needs of the children.

Children must be appropriately supervised. They should usually be within sight and hearing of staff and must always be within sight or hearing, except where a stronger specific requirement applies, such as during eating.

24. Paediatric First Aid

At least one person with a current and appropriate paediatric first aid qualification will be available whenever EYFS children are present and will accompany children on outings where required.

Paediatric first aid qualifications are renewed every three years.

The school displays or otherwise makes available information about staff holding current PFA qualifications.

25. Health and Medicines

The school promotes children's health, including oral health.

We have procedures for responding appropriately where a child is ill or infectious and for reducing the spread of infection.

Medicines are administered in accordance with the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions arrangements.

Medication will only be administered where appropriate parental permission has been obtained.

A record is made whenever medicine is administered, and parents or carers are informed on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

26. Food and Drink

Where the school provides children with meals, snacks or drinks, these will be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

Fresh drinking water will always be available and accessible.

The school has regard to the EYFS nutrition guidance when providing food and drink.

27. Safer Eating and Allergies

Before a child joins the school, information is obtained regarding:

- dietary requirements;
- food preferences;
- allergies;
- intolerances; and
- relevant health requirements.

This information is shared with relevant staff.

At each meal and snack time, staff are clear about who is responsible for checking that food and drink provided is suitable for each child.

Where appropriate, allergy action plans are developed with parents, carers and health professionals and kept up to date.

Staff understand:

- the signs and symptoms of allergies and anaphylaxis;
- the distinction between allergies and intolerances; and
- how to respond to an allergic reaction.

Food is prepared and served in a way that reduces choking risk.

Children are seated safely while eating, and distractions are minimised where possible.

Children must always remain within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating because choking can be silent.

A member of staff holding a valid full paediatric first aid certificate will be present while EYFS children are eating where required by the statutory framework.

Where a choking incident requires intervention, it will be recorded, parents or carers will be informed and incidents will be reviewed for any trends or learning.

28. Behaviour

Children's behaviour is supported through positive relationships, appropriate modelling, clear expectations and developmentally appropriate support.

The school does not use corporal punishment or any punishment that could negatively affect

a child's well-being.

Where physical intervention is absolutely necessary to prevent immediate injury or serious harm, this will be proportionate and recorded.

Parents and carers will be informed on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable following physical intervention.

Our whole-school Behaviour Policy applies to EYFS and is adapted appropriately to children's age and stage of development.

29. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The school has arrangements in place to identify and support children with SEND.

Our SENCO works with EYFS staff, parents, carers and external professionals to ensure needs are identified and supported promptly.

As a maintained school, we have regard to the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.

Provision is adapted appropriately and reasonable adjustments are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

30. Accidents and Injuries

A suitably stocked first aid box is accessible at all times.

The school records accidents, injuries and first aid treatment and informs parents or carers on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Serious incidents are reported to relevant authorities where required by law.

31. Premises, Environment and Equipment

The school ensures that EYFS premises, outdoor areas and equipment are:

- fit for purpose;
- suitable for children's ages;
- safe and appropriately maintained;
- hygienic;
- appropriately organised; and
- compliant with fire and health and safety requirements.

Emergency evacuation procedures are maintained and practised.

Fire exits are kept identifiable, unobstructed and capable of being opened from inside.

32. Banned Dog Breeds

Banned dog breeds, including dogs covered by section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and XL Bully types, must not be kept or present on the school premises.

This applies even where a dog's owner holds an exemption certificate.

33. Toileting and Intimate Hygiene

The school ensures that:

- there are sufficient toilets and handwashing facilities;
- children's privacy and dignity are respected;
- privacy is balanced appropriately with safeguarding and support requirements;
- suitable hygienic changing facilities are available where required; and
- appropriate spare clothing and hygiene resources are available.

The statutory framework specifically requires children's privacy during toileting and changing to be balanced against safeguarding and support needs.

Where children require intimate care, this is managed sensitively in accordance with school safeguarding and intimate-care arrangements.

34. Premises, Confidentiality and Collection Arrangements

The school provides an appropriate space where staff can speak confidentially with parents and carers.

Staff have access to appropriate break areas separate from areas used by children.

Children will only be released into the care of an individual whom the parent or carer has authorised.

Children must not leave the premises unsupervised.

35. Risk Assessment and Outings

The school assesses risks to children's safety and takes reasonable steps to remove or

minimise identified risks.

Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken for:

- the learning environment;
- outdoor provision;
- Forest School;
- visits and outings;
- equipment;
- activities; and
- individual children's needs where necessary.

Staff maintain appropriate supervision on outings and ensure relevant medical, emergency and safeguarding information is available.

36. Children's Screen Use and Online Safety

Technology may be used within EYFS where it has a clear educational purpose and is appropriate to children's age and development.

Screen use will not replace:

- active play;
- communication;
- social interaction;
- physical activity;
- creative experiences; or
- exploration of the real world.

Use of technology will be purposeful, supervised and consistent with the school's Online Safety Policy.

Staff follow school procedures governing mobile phones, cameras and image-sharing devices.

37. Information and Record Keeping

The school maintains accurate records relating to EYFS children, staffing, safeguarding, attendance, accidents, medicines and other statutory matters.

Information held for each child includes:

- full name;
- date of birth;
- parent and carer information;
- parental responsibility information;
- usual living arrangements; and
- emergency contact information.

Wherever possible, at least two emergency contact numbers will be obtained and kept up to date for each child.

Records are managed in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act and school retention arrangements.

38. Complaints

The school's Complaints Policy applies to EYFS.

Written complaints relating to EYFS statutory requirements will be investigated and the complainant will be notified of the outcome within 28 days.

Appropriate records of complaints and outcomes will be maintained.

Parents and carers will also be provided with information about how to contact Ofsted where they believe EYFS requirements are not being met.

39. Monitoring

The Headteacher and EYFS staff regularly monitor:

- curriculum implementation;
- quality of provision;
- safeguarding;
- children's progress;
- SEND provision;
- staffing;
- health and safety;
- safer eating;
- attendance;
- parent partnership; and
- compliance with statutory EYFS requirements.

The Governing Board provides appropriate oversight of EYFS provision.

40. Monitoring and Review of This Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where:

- the EYFS statutory framework changes;
- safeguarding legislation or guidance changes;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education is revised;
- local safeguarding procedures change; or
- school practice requires amendment.

The policy is approved by the Headteacher and Governing Board.