

The St Michael Steiner School Early Years Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

This policy sits alongside our “Curriculum Policy for Kindergarten” which contains more detailed information about the specific Steiner Waldorf early years curriculum. Alongside this Steiner Waldorf curriculum we abide by the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework (2025), which is relevant for education and care in registered schools and settings for children from birth to five years old. In our kindergartens we also have children who are older than five years. Please see our separate ‘Curriculum for the Older Child in kindergarten’.

Steiner Waldorf Kindergartens have all applied and received modifications and exemptions from those areas of the EYFS learning and development requirements and assessment arrangements which are in conflict with the Steiner Waldorf approach, such as the Literacy and Maths learning and development requirements, assessment arrangements and the EYFS Profile. A list of these and exemptions are available.

This document will provide information and should be read by inspectors intending to visit.

1. The learning and development requirements:

The areas of learning and development consist of three prime areas and four specific areas.

PRIME AREAS: These are *Communication and Language*, *Physical development* and *Personal, Social and Emotional development*. These cover the knowledge and skills that are the foundations and building blocks for later formal learning. They are applied and reinforced by the Specific Areas.

SPECIFIC AREAS: These are the areas in which providers must also support children, and through which the three Prime Areas are strengthened and applied: **Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the world; and Expressive Arts and Design.**

These seven areas are described below:

• Communication and language:

- giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment;
- to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves;
- to speak and listen in a range of situations.

• Physical development

- providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive;
- to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement;
- to be helped to understand the importance of physical activity;
- and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
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- **Personal, social and emotional development**

- to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others;
- to form positive relationships and develop respect for others;
- to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings;
- to understand appropriate behaviour in groups;
- and to have confidence in their own abilities.

- **Literacy development** - we have full exemptions and do not have to deliver this area. Please read the "Language and literacy" section in the Curriculum Policy for Kindergarten to see how we fully promote and support the foundations of literacy development through songs, rhymes, story-telling and a rich language environment.

- **Mathematics**

- to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers;
- to calculate simple addition and subtraction problems;
- to understand and explore patterns, spatial reasoning, and mathematical relationships.

- **Understanding the world**

- to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, modern technology and the environment.

- **Expressive arts and design**

- to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials,
- provide opportunities and encouragement for sharing children's thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and (modern) technology.

2. Early learning goals and assessment regulations

We show through our assessment procedures (which include formative and summative assessments) how the children are meeting expected levels, are exceeding them, or are below the expected level ('emerging').

Play and teaching: we are responsible for on-going judgements about the balance between play and teaching, between activities led by the children and activities led or guided by the adults.

English as an additional language (EAL): the relevant requirements give clearer focus on the reasonable steps providers must take, including the assessment of children's skills in English, and we will support those who might need it.

3. Welfare requirements

We adhere to all the welfare requirements. Copies of our policies and procedures are on the school website and risk assessments are in the office.

Planning:

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and develop in their practice. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and,
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

NOTES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

The following documents are kept together for Inspectors, and for parent information in the school office.

The EYFS is a statutory framework for all providers caring for children from Birth to statutory school age (the 1st September following the child's 5th birthday). This can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

EXEMPTIONS INFORMATION: We are exempted from aspects of the EYFS along with all Steiner Waldorf kindergartens in the UK, including the area of Literacy, written numbers and use of ICT. Exemptions document is available in kindergarten.

The Guide to the EYFS in Steiner Waldorf Settings is a useful tool to understand and interpret the Steiner Waldorf curriculum, and it is available in kindergarten, or to download from: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/2387/7/780cec736755cbe8ae2756917f4e732d_Redacted.pdf