St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation

For the good of all through curiosity, creativity and love

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Index		Page
1.	Introduction	2
2.	Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
3.	Curriculum & Planning	3
4.	Assessment	4
5.	The role of Parents and Carers	4

St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

At St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation, our vision is 'For the good of all – through curiosity, creativity and love.' This vision inspires everything that the federation does.
It applies equally to all the federation's policies with the intention that our policies impact as fairly and positively as possible to meet the needs of all members of our schools' community.

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life 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."

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself. For young children there is no distinction between work and play.

Learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the foundation stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

1: Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage
In EYFS the federation believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually, emotionally and spiritually, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.
The federation aims:

- To provide a happy, caring, safe and secure environment for learning, which meets the individual needs and interests of the children.
- To develop warm and secure relationships between children and adults
- To provide a high quality curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage document.
- To develop the moral and social values of the children through Christian values.
- To encourage active learning through first hand experiences, enquiry, both in indoor and outdoor play, and through verbal and non-verbal communication.
- To encourage children to become self-motivated and independent learners with a positive attitude to learning and self-discipline.

- To value the cultural diversity within the school, federation and community.
- To foster positive home school links and share a common sense of purpose with parents.

2: Curriculum and Planning
Teaching in the EYFS is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'.

The curriculum comprises of the 3 prime areas of learning:
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

The 4 specific areas, which strengthen the prime areas:
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These areas of learning and development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all areas of learning and development are closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum, which allows children to make links between what they are learning.

Throughout the EYFS the federation plan activities to give children learning experiences and opportunities to work towards the Early Learning Goals and prepare them for the National Curriculum. Teaching and learning takes place within the classroom and outside areas. Within these areas children will participate in a variety of activities, both with an adult and independently.

The federation meet the needs of all their children through:
- Planning opportunities that build on and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and seek to develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- 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;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment inside and outside in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities and learning opportunities
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This is done in partnership with the federation's support staff, inclusion manager and other agencies as necessary.

3: Assessment
In the first three weeks of Reception year, the federation will carry out a Reception baseline assessment in line with national expectations.

Assessments are based primarily on observation of daily activities and events. They take into account the perspectives of the child, parents and other adults who have significant interactions with the child. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation stage is on going and is an integral part of the learning and development process. The observations and assessments are used to identify learning priorities and plan the next stages in the learning experiences for the child.

In order to ensure their judgements are accurate and consistent the federation have internal moderation meetings, with other schools and take part in all LA moderation meetings. During the foundation stage children are regularly assessed against the early year's outcomes age banding – entering, developing, secure. At the end of the reception year progress is assessed as emerging, expected and exceeding in each of the 17 areas comprising the Early Learning Goals.

In the final term of EYFS, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

4: The Role of Parents and Carers
The federation believe that all parents and carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. They develop this through:

- Inviting all parents and carers to a meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- Offering parents opportunities to talk to the teacher about the child's progress at parent consultations during the year. An Annual Report is provided on each child for all areas of learning and also comments of effective learning.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the teacher if there are any concerns. They will arrange the time to meet with parents if necessary as soon as possible. They are proactive about contacting parents if they have any concerns about a child.
- Encouraging parents to share their child's learning at home by responding to electronic observations and sharing learning from home using Evidence Me, an internet based observation system.
- Half Termly share and celebrate mornings so that parents can share their child's learning experiences and also to join in with their learning opportunities in the EYFS area, where circumstances allow.
- Curriculum sessions to support children's learning across different areas of learning
- Actively exploring additional opportunities to include the parent's voice in their child's learning journey.