

FALCONHURST SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage

POLICY

‘Building Strong Foundations from the Start’

Learning well, staying safe and building strong foundations.



Policy owner	Headteacher / EYFS Leader
Monitoring responsibility	Full Governing Body
Approved by	Full Governing Body
Date adopted	September 2026
Next review	September 2027
Review cycle	Annual, or sooner if guidance changes
Key guidance	EYFS statutory framework effective 1 September 2026

1. Purpose and scope

This policy explains how Falconhurst School meets the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements for learning, development, assessment, safeguarding and welfare. It applies to the school's Nursery and Reception provision. Falconhurst admits Nursery children from the term following their third birthday and does not provide places for babies or children under two.

Our values of Courage, Ambition, Determination and Success shape an ambitious, inclusive curriculum. 'Good for all and harms none' underpins the way we remove barriers, protect children and work with families so that every child can belong, participate and thrive.

2. Statutory framework

This policy has regard to the Department for Education's Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers dated 13 July 2026 and effective from 1 September 2026. It should be read with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection, Safer Recruitment, Health and Safety, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions, SEND, Behaviour, Attendance, Online Safety and Safer Sleeping policies.

The 2026 framework introduced or clarified requirements concerning safer sleep, children's screen use, banned dog breeds and safeguarding practice. The existing safer-eating requirements remain in force.

3. Structure of Falconhurst EYFS

Nursery provides places for children aged three and over, including 15-hour and eligible 30-hour arrangements in accordance with the school's Nursery Terms and Conditions. Reception normally operates as one class of up to 30 children, with places allocated through Milton Keynes City Council's admission arrangements. Staffing and grouping decisions always comply with the applicable EYFS ratios and infant class-size legislation and take account of children's needs.

4. Curriculum

The curriculum is broad, balanced and ambitious. It develops the three prime areas—communication and language; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development—and the four specific areas—literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; and expressive arts and design.

Staff plan from children's starting points, needs, interests and prior learning. They use play, modelling, talk, stories, direct teaching, guided practice and a language-rich environment. The characteristics of effective teaching and learning—playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically—inform provision. As children develop, the balance gradually includes more deliberate teaching of essential knowledge and skills for Year 1.

4.1 Inclusion and additional needs

The EYFS curriculum is adapted so that children with SEND, disabilities, English as an additional language, medical needs or other barriers can participate and make progress. Staff act promptly on concerns, work with the SENCO and families, and seek specialist advice where appropriate. Home languages are valued while children receive sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English.

4.2 Children's screen use

The school has regard to current DfE guidance on screen use. Digital technology is used purposefully, for a clear educational or accessibility benefit, with adult interaction and appropriate content. Screen use does not displace talk, play, physical activity, creative exploration, outdoor learning or relationships. Staff consider duration, content, posture, distance, supervision, individual need and online safety.

5. Assessment

Assessment is proportionate and embedded in daily practice. Practitioners use their knowledge of each child, interactions, observation and information from parents to identify learning, plan next steps and act on concerns. Recorded evidence is not required for every judgement and assessment must not create unnecessary workload.

- The Reception Baseline Assessment is completed within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception.
- The EYFS Profile is completed in the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches five and no later than 30 June.
- Each child is assessed against the 17 early learning goals as meeting the expected level or emerging.
- Profile outcomes are shared with parents and the Year 1 teacher and reported to the local authority when required.

6. Partnership with parents and key persons

Parents and carers are children's first and most important educators. Transition visits, daily contact, ClassDojo communication and termly meetings support a regular two-way flow of information. Families are kept informed about progress, welfare, staffing organisation and any concern. Each child has a key person who helps tailor care and learning, supports the child to settle and helps the family access specialist support where needed.

Parents are asked to provide more than two emergency contact numbers where possible and to keep contact, medical, dietary, allergy and collection information up to date.

7. Staffing, suitability and professional development

Falconhurst follows the current EYFS framework and its Safer Recruitment Policy. Required identity, enhanced DBS and children's barred-list checks, references, qualifications and suitability checks are completed and recorded before a person starts where the framework requires. Staff must disclose information that may affect suitability. Induction includes safeguarding, child protection, emergency evacuation and health and safety.

All practitioners receive safeguarding training meeting Annex C and renew it every two years, with refresher activity where needed. The DSL completes Annex C-compliant training and provides ongoing advice. Staff receive appropriate supervision, coaching and professional development.

8. Staffing ratios and deployment

Staffing arrangements meet children's needs and ensure safety. For three- and four-year-olds in Falconhurst's maintained-school Nursery, the school applies the statutory ratio of at least one adult for every 13 children when a school teacher is working directly with the group, with at least one other member of staff holding an approved level 3 qualification or approved experience-based route status. Reception complies with infant class-size legislation and normally has at least one teacher for every 30 pupils.

Ratios are minimum requirements. Leaders consider the activity, environment, children's needs, staff experience and the ability to respond quickly to emergencies. Children are usually within sight and hearing and always within sight or hearing, except that children eating and sleeping must always be within both sight and hearing.

9. Paediatric first aid

At least one person with a current paediatric first aid certificate for a full course meeting Annex A must be on the premises, available at all times children are present, and accompany children on outings. Certificates are renewed every three years. Leaders consider the number of children, staffing and layout so a qualified person can respond quickly; minimum coverage is increased where the risk assessment indicates.

Staff with a level 2 or level 3 qualification obtained since 30 June 2016 must gain PFA within three months of starting work to count at that level in statutory ratios, subject only to the framework's disability exception. A person completing the experience-based route must hold PFA before counting at level 3. Falconhurst makes current PFA certificates, or a list of qualified staff, available to parents.

During every meal and snack, a member of staff holding the required full-course PFA certificate is in the room.

10. Safeguarding and welfare

The school takes all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. Practitioners are alert to concerns in children's lives and report them immediately under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Child absences are followed up promptly, using emergency contacts and safeguarding procedures where appropriate. Allegations about adults are managed under KCSIE and reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer, Ofsted and other agencies where required.

10.1 Health, medicines and accidents

The school promotes physical health, oral health and emotional wellbeing. Written parental permission is obtained for each medicine; administration is recorded and parents informed the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable. A suitably stocked first-aid box is accessible. Accidents, injuries and first aid are recorded and parents informed. Serious incidents are notified to the relevant agencies within required timescales.

10.2 Safer eating and choking prevention

Meals, snacks and drinks are healthy, balanced and nutritious, and fresh drinking water is always accessible. Before admission, the school obtains and shares relevant dietary, allergy, intolerance and health information. Allergy action plans are agreed and kept current; staff understand allergy, intolerance and anaphylaxis and know each child's emergency arrangements.

Food is prepared and served to prevent choking and to meet each child's developmental needs. Staff follow current DfE food-safety and EYFS nutrition guidance. Whole or round foods are modified appropriately; for example, grapes and similar fruit are cut lengthways into quarters, sausages are cut lengthways into narrow strips, hard fruit and vegetables are softened or grated, stones and bones are removed, and nuts, popcorn, hard sweets and other unsuitable choking hazards are not served.

Children sit upright in an appropriately sized chair in a calm eating space with distractions minimised. They do not eat while walking, running, playing or travelling. Children are always

within sight and hearing of staff. Choking can be completely silent: staff actively watch children and, where possible, sit facing them to monitor safe eating, prevent food sharing and identify allergic reactions. A named adult checks each child's food and drink at every meal and snack.

A choking incident requiring intervention is managed by trained staff, recorded with where and how it occurred, and reported to parents. Records are reviewed periodically for patterns and practice is changed where needed. All staff preparing or handling food receive appropriate food-hygiene training.

10.3 Safer sleeping

Safer-sleep arrangements apply to any EYFS child who sleeps while in the school's care, including children in Nursery and Reception. Falconhurst does not admit babies or children under two; consequently, the framework's additional under-two requirements concerning cots, back-sleeping, feet-to-foot bedding, baby sleep bags, baby-room provision and an adult remaining in the same room with a baby under six months are not operational requirements for the school's current age range.

All Nursery and Reception children must nevertheless be placed or allowed to sleep safely, remain within sight and hearing of staff and be checked frequently. The Safer Sleeping Policy sets out safe positioning, environment, supervision, recording, parent contact and emergency action. Recurring or planned sleep is supported by an individual risk assessment or healthcare plan where appropriate.

10.4 Premises, dogs and risk assessment

Premises, equipment and outdoor areas are suitable, secure, hygienic and organised for the age and needs of children. Daily outdoor access is provided unless circumstances make this inappropriate. Emergency evacuation arrangements and fire-safety equipment are maintained. Dogs prohibited under section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, including the XL Bully type, must not be kept or present on the premises at any time, even where an owner holds a certificate of exemption.

Risk assessment is proportionate and identifies what must be checked, when, by whom and how risks will be removed or minimised. Written assessments are used where helpful to inform consistent practice and demonstrate risk management.

10.5 Toileting, privacy and collection

The school provides adequate toilets, hand basins, hygienic changing facilities and necessary supplies. Privacy is balanced with safeguarding and support needs. Children are released only to people explicitly notified by a parent or carer and do not leave the premises unsupervised. Visitor identity is checked and unauthorised access is prevented.

11. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and EYFS Leader monitor implementation through curriculum review, safeguarding oversight, checks of PFA coverage and certificates, supervision, records, risk assessments and discussion with staff and families. The Governing Body receives assurance about compliance. This policy is reviewed annually and sooner following statutory change, a significant incident or identified weakness.

Appendix 1 Related policies and procedures

Requirement	Where addressed
Safeguarding and allegations	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Low-level Concerns and Allegations procedures
Suitability and recruitment	Safer Recruitment Policy
Illness, accidents and medicines	Health and Safety Policy; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
Safer sleep	Safer Sleeping Policy and sleep records
Safer eating and allergies	This policy; allergy action plans; choking and accident records
Missing child, non-collection and visitors	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; site procedures
SEND and equality	SEND Information Report and Policy; Equality Policy
Complaints	Complaints Policy

Reference framework

Department for Education, Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026; Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance; Help for Early Years Providers guidance on food safety, screen use and safer sleep; Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.