MERTON COURT SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

To be reviewed by: EYFS Coordinator, Headmaster & LT (November 2027)	
Signed by the Headmaster/Proprietor:	
Shared with staff:	14/10/26
Put on Website:	14/10/26

Related Policies and documents:
Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2026)
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Complaint Procedures
Admissions
Assessment and Reporting
Administration of Medicines
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
Working together to Safeguard Children (March 2026)
Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026)
Prevent Duty Guidance (2015 updated March 2024)
What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for Practitioners
Guidance on Infection control in school and childcare settings
Supervision of Children Policy (Including Missing Children).

Inspiring Education for Life

Merton Court provides an environment that fosters confidence, curiosity and resilience. "**Head, Hand, Heart**" is central to the ethos of Merton Court School, and delivers innovative first-class teaching that inspires and challenges each child. Within the context of 'Statutory Framework for the EYFS (September 2026) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2026), we want each child to be educated in all matters to ensure that they have the skills to stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, make positive contributions and achieve economic well-being. The prime concern always must be the interests and safety of the children.

Merton Court School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

Circulation

This policy is addressed to the Headmaster/Proprietor, all teaching staff, all business support staff including lunch supervisors, peripatetic self-employed staff using Merton Court School premises, cleaners, sports coaches, members of the Advisory Board, any volunteers working on behalf of the school in a paid or un-paid capacity, visitors as well as any paid contractors who are working on site during term time. Throughout this policy staff will be used to reflect the whole circulation.

"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential"

Source: Statutory Framework for the EYFS (September 2026)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Merton Court School, EYFS comprises of all children in the Early Years (EY) and Reception Classes (J1). Children here enjoy social interaction, intellectual stimulation and personal development under the caring guidance of our highly trained specialist staff. Our specialist Early Years Department offers a safe, structured environment for pre-main school children aged 3-4 years. At the age of 4 they move into our Reception Year where we have two classes.

When a child joins the EYFS, we inform parents and/or carers of the name of their **key worker** and explain their role. This is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the school, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. The class teacher in both Early Years and Reception act as Key Worker. The Key Worker seeks to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate. (See SEND Policy). Throughout the EYFS we 'root and branch' our approach through our philosophy of 'N.E.S.T.L.E' (Nurture, Exercise, Stimulation, Talk, Love, Environment).

Our Aims

To develop the child personally, socially and emotionally by;

- Offering a safe and secure environment,
- Making each child feel valued,
- Helping the child form stable relationships,
- Encouraging a sense of responsibility and consideration for others,
- Developing an awareness that there are similarities and differences among all groups of people but that all groups are equally important,

Merton Court School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

- Providing resources and materials that reflect the many different types of backgrounds, challenging multicultural and gender issues,
- Developing a curriculum that includes discussion and activities on different religions, cultures and languages.

To develop the child intellectually by;

- Providing a stimulating environment in which each child can learn through first-hand experience
- Promoting the use of language
- Stimulating the child's curiosity
- Giving opportunities for children to make their own decisions and encouraging active learning
- Encouraging self-evaluation.

To develop the child physically by:

- Improving skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement by providing opportunities for children to use their bodies effectively by providing space for learning experiences both indoor and outdoor
- Developing fine motor skills through activities such as modelling, painting, cutting, construction, 'Funky Fingers' activities and Write Dance.
- Developing an awareness of their physical ability through weekly PE, Games, Swimming, Dance and Forest School sessions,
- Promoting the importance of a healthy, balanced diet,
- Promoting the importance of good oral health.

To develop the child aesthetically by;

- Providing a stimulating environment in which creativity, imagination, originality and expressiveness are valued
- Providing opportunities to experiment with a variety of materials
- Providing opportunities for children to use and explore their senses
- Encouraging children to be creative and express themselves through a variety of media; music, dance, role-play art activities.

To establish a smooth transition from home to school by;

- Starting from the child, considering any previous pre-school experiences,
- adopting an admissions procedure that eases the transition from home to school, e.g. taster sessions in either EY or J1 and inviting parents to 'Tiny Tots and Toddlers' sessions,
- Involving parents with their children's learning by sharing information and, having opportunities for sharing parents' expertise and experiences.

We believe that each child should attend school with a sense of enjoyment, anticipation and remember the time spent in school with pride.

Curriculum:

The EYFS at Merton Court begins when children start in EY (age 3+) and continues until the end of J1 (Reception). We recognise that the educational process starts

Merton Court School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

earlier than this with learning in the home and many children attending a pre-school facility before they join our setting.

A broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum is rooted in our child centred philosophy 'N.E.S.T.L.E', in which the focus is the development of the individual as a whole person. **Active learning is at the heart of the developmental process, children learn best from hands on experience.**

We aim to make our activities appropriate to the needs of each individual child. They are flexible enough to take account of individual diversity as well as be relevant to every child.

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into seven Educational Programmes with a focus on ensuring that children's cognitive development proceeds hand-in-hand with their social and personal development.

Prime Areas

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will

Merton Court School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision help with hand-eye co-ordination which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practise of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Specific Areas

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words(decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

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, 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.

Merton Court School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

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 increase 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.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Staff consider the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for every child across each of the educational programmes. Small class sizes mean that Practitioners have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the children in their care.
Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three Prime Areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three Prime Areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively and become ready for main school. It is expected that the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three Prime Areas. Throughout the EYFS, if a child's progress in any Prime Area gives cause for concern, staff discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child, with early help being put into place if needed.
Staff consider whether a child may have an individual educational difference or disability which may require specialist support. They liaise with the SENDCo, who works with them to help families to access relevant services from other agencies as appropriate.

Children learn best when they are in control and need to be given the opportunity to be responsible for their own learning. They need a stimulating and challenging environment, both indoors and outdoors, in which to develop. In particular, the environment should promote personal and social skills and support the acquisition and development of language.

Merton Court School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

Personal, social and emotional well-being is the basis for successful learning and development. The whole child is important; social, emotional, physical and intellectual development is inter-related. Children develop individually and at their own rates and need to be given time to move through the developmental stages at their own pace.

At Merton Court, each area of learning and development in the EYFS is implemented through **Planned, Purposeful Play** and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. Play based learning is paramount and children can direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning. All staff who work in our EYFS are involved in this process. There is an on-going judgement to be made by staff about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help each child prepare for more formal learning, in Year 1.

The EYFS Coordinator is Miss H Hall. In her absence, EYFS staff should seek guidance and support from members of the School Senior Leadership Team.

Parents as Partners

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

- Ensuring children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during taster sessions and our Tiny Tots and Toddler sessions,
- Information mornings for EY and J1 parents in July prior to their child joining. Here they receive pertinent information and meet the class teachers. Information is also shared about our ethos and curriculum,
- Asking parents to complete a medical form and fill in a form about their child including their likes, dislikes and any concerns they may have etc,
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher at the first possible opportunity if there are any concerns. Coffee mornings/Meet and Greet for parents are held during the first half of each new term, along with a 'How's it going?' forum,
- Inviting parents to attend meetings providing information about other areas of the curriculum, e.g. '*Letterland* and Handwriting' Workshops,
- Holding formal meetings for parents twice a year in J1 and termly in EY at which the teacher and the parent/carer discuss the child's progress. Parents receive reports on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each term in J1 and in the Autumn and Summer terms in EY,
- Organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between children, the school and parents i.e. 'Drop in/Drop off' Open Morning sessions, music-related performances, Sports Day etc,

Merton Court School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

• Inviting parents to regularly access their child's Home-School Dairies, make comments relating to their child's achievements by adding photographs and comments to them,

• Making parents aware of the curriculum and ongoing activities through the curriculum plans on the class notice boards (Virtual and 3D) along with any other relevant messages/information daily on the boards outside each class. Information is also shared with parents via our '*Parentmail*' system and Yeargroup Google Drives,

- Ensuring that any child that is being collected by anyone unfamiliar to staff, is only released by the exchange of a secure password provided by the parents.
- Ensuring a quiet, private area is provided for staff to talk to parents/carers away from the children.

RATIOS

Merton Court School generously complies with the statutory requirements in adult – child ratios.

In the EYFS during school hours and on the premises the adult to child ratio in Early Years is 1:13, if a member of staff with QTS, EYTS, EYPS or another approved level 6 qualification is working directly with the children. The ratio is 1:8 in all other cases with at least one member of staff holding an approved Level 3 qualification and at least half of all other staff holding an approved Level 2 qualification. In our J1 (Reception) classes the ratio is 1:30 with at least one member of staff holding an appropriate Level 6 qualification.
For off-site visits and trips the adult: child ratio will be 1:4 for EY and 1:5 for J1. All children are always within hearing of a designated practitioner and during mealtimes are within both sight and hearing.

Inclusion and SEND in the EYFS

In the EYFS we give our children every opportunity to achieve their full potential and to have the best possible start to their life story. We do this by taking account of their educational differences, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS. Some children progress beyond this point.

At Merton Court School we are aware that children may not progress at the expected rate. We identify those children who do not meet these developmental milestones through a range of methods, including information from parents, information received from previous settings or outside professional agencies, on-going teacher knowledge of the child, along with EYFS Profile and termly school reports. Assessment and teaching strategies within the EYFS are a good fit with the 'assess, plan, do, review' system advocated for working with children with SEND and our on-going knowledge of the child, tracking and recording enabling us to plan appropriate next steps for all children.

Merton Court School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

Those children who may need additional help to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of J1, are largely supported within the EYFS through in-class strategies which are implemented by the class teacher. These may include:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing extra time, 1:1 or in small groups with the class teacher or teaching assistant, focusing on key areas for development;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources and activities which meet as many of the seven areas of learning as possible: this allows children with different learning styles to engage their fullest potential;
- Planning challenging activities of children, whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Although we endeavour to make reasonable provision for children identified with SEND, it may not be possible to do so within the school's resources. Where a pupil is identified with SEND, which in the professional judgement of the Headmaster (and SENDCo) requires a level of support which school cannot reasonably be expected to provide, manage or arrange, School may require parents, after appropriate consultation, to withdraw their child. Fees in lieu of notice will not be chargeable in these circumstances. (Please refer to our Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy.)

Equal Opportunities

All members of our EYFS are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare children for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) are well supported in our EYFS setting. We value their home language and culture and reflect these in our environment. We provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language whilst supporting their language development at home. We ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard of English throughout the EYFS. This is achieved through the modelling of excellent spoken English, through the provision of a language rich environment and by encouraging multiple opportunities for speaking and listening. (Please refer to our EAL Policy.)

Early Learning Goals Communication, Language and Literacy skills are assessed in English. If a child's grasp of the English Language is not strong, then practitioners will explore the child's skills in their home language with parents to establish whether there is a cause for concern regarding language delay.

Assessment

Throughout the EYFS, as part of the teaching and learning process, each child is tracked across the seven areas of learning with reference to their age and stage of development. These assessments are made based on teacher knowledge of the child, observations and knowledge of the whole child. In the final term of the Reception year, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile sums up that knowledge in relation to the seventeen Early Learning Goals (ELG) and states whether the child is emerging, or at the expected level for the ELG. In Reception the profile is completed throughout the year to track individual achievements and set future targets. At the Autumn Term parents' evenings, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is explained to parents. In the Summer Term parents' evening and in the final reports to parents, the achievements of the individual child against the 17 Early Learning Goals and are discussed verbally with parents and/or carers.

Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short, in person, commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. Reception children visit Year 1 on several occasions throughout the year as part of the transition process to the next stage of their education.

The Early Year Foundation Stage Profile forms the basis for reports to parents. Profile results are submitted to the London Borough of Bexley on or before the date requested.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

The safety and welfare of all children in the EYFS at Merton Court School is our highest priority. Our ethos is to know everyone as an individual and to provide a secure and caring environment so that every pupil can learn in safety. In all matters relating to child protection the School will follow the procedures laid down by our own (or where appropriate the relevant child's) Local Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People with DfE guidance contained in Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2026) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2026).

Tessa Langton –Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Renee Harding – DDSL
Charlie Jahaj - DDSL
Luke Barley - DDSL

All members of staff have a duty to safeguard our children's welfare and must therefore familiarise themselves and always comply with the School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Health and Safety and Welfare guidelines. This includes a duty both to children in need and to children at risk of harm. All staff have read Part 1 of KCSIE along Section 5 (Sept 2026). All School staff should be

aware that safeguarding incidents can happen at any time and anywhere and are required to be alert to any possible concerns.

It is important to us that all children in the EYFS at Merton Court are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. 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. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all our children.

EYFS follow the same evacuation procedures as the whole school (See Fire Prevention and Emergency Evacuation Procedures Policy).

Safeguarding

Please refer to our whole school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and other relevant policies for detailed information on:

Safer Recruitment

Unexplained absences

Staff safeguarding training

Whistleblowing

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS –Sept 2026).

Child Absences

Please refer to our whole school Attendance Policy which also applies to children in the EYFS.

Key Person/Suitable People

As mentioned earlier, each child in the EYFS is assigned a Key Person. Parents are informed of the name of their child's Key Person when they join Merton Court and the role they play in their child's education. The Key Person helps to ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The Key Person will seek to engage and support parents/carers, along with, ensuring the child becomes familiar with the setting and in guiding their child's developmental progress at home. They will help to engage families with more specialist support if appropriate. In Reception(J1) the Key Person is usually the child's form teacher.

At MCS, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the 'Statutory Framework for the EYFS September 2026). We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children

- Promote good health (including oral 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 (See Whole School Behaviour & Exclusion Policy)

• Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so and have undergone the relevant checks

• 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

At MCS there are clear procedures for assessing risk which includes procedures for keeping children safe during trips and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment.

In line with the 'Statutory Framework for the EYFS September 2026), we undertake to ensure that:

- Medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Prescription medicines will only be administered if they have been prescribed by a medical doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist and an Administration of Medicine form completed.
- Fresh drinking water is always available
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required
- The lunch provided is healthy, balanced and nutritious
- A healthy snack is provided by parents during the morning and afternoon sessions.
- EYFS staff responsible for food handling and food preparation have received training in food hygiene
- A paediatric first aider is always accessible, and a record of accidents and injuries is kept
- Fire and emergency evacuation policy and procedures are in place
- Our physical space complies with the Statutory requirements for children in our care.

The staff: children ratio meets the statutory guidelines for children in the EYFS and those attending Breakfast Club, After School Club and Holiday Playscheme.

Wet and soiled children

In line with our Admissions Policy all children must be toilet trained (clean & dry) to join our EYFS. We do, however, accept that children will have the odd accident and we provide appropriate and sufficient toilet and washing facilities (1 toilet and wash hand basin for every 10 children) for the number of children in the setting, as well as separate toilet facilities for adults. If a child in the EYFS wets or soils themselves the child will be changed in the toilet/changing area. The member of staff discovering this must inform colleagues and ensure that the child is changed.

Children's privacy when toileting is balanced with safeguarding and any support they may need. Children will be encouraged to wipe and clean themselves, however, if a child is unable to be adequately cleaned then parents will be called to come and collect their child. Once the child is adequately cleaned the staff member must change their gloves and help the child (if needed) to change into a spare uniform from their school bag. If they do not have spare uniform, School will provide clean clothes. Any soiled clothes must be placed in a securely tied bag and given to the parents/carers upon collection. Staff must ensure they dispose of plastic gloves immediately after use by putting them in a sealed bag and placing it in the bin. Parents/carers will be informed at the end of the end of the session if the child has had to have clean clothes.

Safer Eating

A member of staff with a paediatric first aid certificate is always present and can see the children's faces when children they are eating. Staff involved in preparing or handling food in classrooms have received training in food hygiene.

Fresh water is readily available to all children in their own water bottles which are regularly topped up.

If a child experiences a choking incident requiring intervention, details are recorded of where and how the incident happened and parents/carers are informed. Records are reviewed regularly to see if there are any trends.

Please refer to our Food and Nutrition Statement, First Aid Policy (Appendix 1) and Allergens Policy.

Safer Sleeping and Rest Arrangements

The School recognises that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have individual needs and that, although there is not a designated nap time within their school day, children may occasionally require a period of rest or sleep. This may occur if a child falls asleep naturally, becomes tired, or requires rest due to illness or wellbeing needs.

In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (Sept 2026), the school ensures that any child who needs to sleep or rest is provided with a safe, comfortable and supervised environment. Children will rest in an appropriate area within the classroom where they always remain visible to staff, using suitable resources for comfort. Staff will monitor sleeping children regularly, with checks carried out at least every 10 minutes to ensure they remain safe and well.

Where a child requires rest due to illness, parents/carers will be contacted in accordance with the school's medical procedures. The school works in partnership with families to understand and respond to children's individual needs and regularly reviews its safer sleep and rest arrangements to ensure they remain in line with current guidance.

First Aid

All staff in our EYFS hold either a full or emergency paediatric first aid certificate. At least one person with a full paediatric certificate is always on the premises when children are present and when accompanying the children on outings.

Staff taking Medication/other substances

EYFS practitioners must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. If an EYFS Practitioner needs to take medication, medical advice must confirm that the medication is unlikely to impair that member of staff's ability to look after children properly. The medication must always be securely stored out of reach of children.

Missing Child Procedures

Please refer to our Supervision of Children Policy (Including Missing Children).

Mobile phone/electronic devices/smart watches and camera use in the EYFS

Merton Court School allows EYFS practitioners to bring in mobile phones for their own personal use. These must be kept away from children and always kept on silent mode in staff lockers apart from during designated breaks in the staff room. If an EYFS practitioner needs to make an emergency telephone call, they may do so from the School Office. Staff should provide their next-of-kin with the School phone number should they need to be contacted in an emergency. Mobile phones or any other personal electronic devices must not be used to take photographs of Merton Court School children anywhere within the school grounds or outside of school. School Ipads and cameras are provided to take photographs to support the completion of the EYFS Profile. These must be locked away securely when not in use. The school is a 'no phone zone' and signs to this effect are displayed throughout the school. (See All Electronic Devices capable of capturing or storing Images Policy).

Screen Use in the Early Years

The School recognises the importance of supporting children to develop healthy and balanced relationships with technology. Screen use within the Early Years setting is limited during the school day and is used primarily to support teaching and learning. Teachers use their professional judgement to determine when technology is appropriate, ensuring that screen use enhances children's experiences and supports meaningful learning outcomes.

Technology is used purposefully to encourage active engagement, exploration, communication and interaction, rather than for passive entertainment. Staff ensure that children have a broad range of opportunities for hands on, play based learning experiences alongside any use of digital technology.

Screens may also be used as part of the school's after-school club provision. (See Wraparound Care Policy).

Banded Dog Breeds

Banded dog breeds (meaning dogs to which Section 1 of the dangerous dogs' act, 1991 applies, including XL Bully type) will not be kept or be present on the premises at any time.

Complaints

There is a detailed complaints procedure in place in the unlikely event that a parent and/or carer does not believe that the school is meeting their requirements or the requirements of the EYFS. Any written complaint within the EYFS will be resolved within 28 days of receipt. See the 'Complaints Procedure' available on request from the School Office for further details.

Staff Qualifications, Training, Support and Skills

All EYFS staff receives induction and ongoing training during INSET days at Merton Court including Safeguarding, Prevent, Health & Safety and Fire training. Termly appraisal/supervision meetings are held with all EYFS staff to discuss children's progress and to coach and support staff in their own personal development. Team meetings are held termly and class meetings monthly as a minimum. EYFS staff actively attend appropriate LA training meetings and networking sessions to extend and cascade their knowledge.

If at any time a parent/carer feels that the school is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework they may contact either Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

Ofsted – 0300 123 4666 or Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

ISI – 0207 600 0100 OR Email concerns@isi.net