


# The Aylesbury Vale Academy Trust



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RESPECT | ASPIRATION | RESILIENCE

## EYFS Policy

<b>Policy Reference:</b>	AVA 040
<b>Description:</b>	This policy aims to describe our Early Years curriculum and show how the Academy Primary Early Years department strives to give children the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential
<b>Status:</b>	Statutory Policy
<b>Policy Audience:</b>	Staff, Students and Parents/Carers
<b>Academy Contact:</b>	Academy Principal
<b>Other related AVA policies and procedures:</b>	Equality Policy, Child Protection Policy, E-Safety Procedures, Safeguarding Procedures, Intimate care policy, Preschool Admissions Policy, Admissions Policy
<b>Governor Committee:</b>	Full Governing Body
<b>Approved by the Governing Board on:</b>	28.01.2026
<b>Latest Date for Next Review:</b>	28.01.2027
<b>Version + Schedule of Amendments:</b>	V2 - 28.01.2026 – Reviewed and amended
<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>Date of Signature:</b>	28.01.2026
In reviewing this policy the Governing Board has had regard to the Equality Act 2010 and carried out an equality impact assessment. It is satisfied that no group with a protected characteristic will be unfairly disadvantaged by this policy.	

# Aylesbury Vale Academy Early Years Policy

## Our vision:

- A clear, progressive, knowledge and skills-based curriculum for 2–5-year olds
- A chance to learn skills for life and growing independence
- A strong emphasis on Parent Partnership and supporting family units
- A curriculum that focuses on child development and skills
- A strong start to their learning with a shared pedagogical approach.
- A clear focus on embedding Communication and Language in all areas of a child's learning
- Prioritising settling and forming attachments with Family Key Carers
- An enabling environment with enhancements and invitations to play
- Child-led interests explored and developed
- Adult-led opportunities to expand on their learning and development through objective-led planning

## Intent

### 1. Aims:

- That children at the Aylesbury Vale Academy access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

### 2. Legislation

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, effective 01 September 2025.

### 3. Structure of Early Years:

- Preschool: 2–4-year-olds
- Reception: 4–5-year-olds

At The Aylesbury Vale Academy, we have a 2–4-year-old preschool provision, with AM, PM as well as full time spaces; consisting of 30hr funded/privately funded or a combination of partially funded and privately funded; with a total of 48 children at any time.

Eligible parents will be able to access their funded entitlement hours.

*Please refer to the Preschool Admission policy for further information.*

We also have 2 reception classes, offering a total of 60 places full school time hours.

At Aylesbury Vale Academy, we offer an enhanced transition for our Reception and Preschool children with 'stay and play' sessions provided prior to starting. We offer a single point of entry for our Reception cohort in Autumn 1 and three-point entry into our Preschool for Autumn 1, Spring 1, and Summer 1.

*Please refer to the Preschool Admission policy for further information.*

We have trained teams in both Reception and Preschool led by an Early Years Leader. In Preschool, there are two room leaders, and three key carers and in Reception two teachers, and two learning support assistants.

All classes have access to our shared outdoor learning environment during free flow, with the continuous provision and areas of learning, spread across the space.

## **4. The Curriculum**

Our early years setting follows the statutory curriculum requirements as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework effective 01 September 2025.

We offer a bespoke, broad, and balanced curriculum that covers the statutory aspects as well as other knowledge and skills to support pupils' personal development, prepare pupils for their next stage of education and develop the whole child.

Each term offers a new over-arching theme (also known as a 'Topic') which is published on the Academy website. The themes enable staff to plan and develop the children's learning opportunities, along-side the children's own interests and lines of enquiry.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

### **The prime areas are:**

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social, and emotional development

### **The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:**

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

### **Within these, the EYFS setting works to ensure that:**

- Children develop the Characteristics of Effective Learning including, Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, and Creating and Thinking Critically.

As the children enter Preschool and Reception, we aim to develop the Prime areas of learning. As we get to know the children and they settle, they form attachments with their Teachers and Key Carers. We work with the children to ensure they feel safe in our school, which enables them to access the enabling environment with the support of their trusted adult.

We use the non-statutory document, *Development Matters* as a framework for our Curriculum.

We aim to build upon what the children already know and can do and to develop a disposition to learn with a positive attitude to learning. Children are encouraged to think for themselves and develop skills of confidence, independence, and cooperation.

We aim to ensure that all children feel secure, included, and valued, and to work with and alongside Parents and Key Carers encouraging them to join us at every opportunity.

## **Implementation:**

### **5. Our Pedagogy**

Our pedagogy is child-centred, firmly based around communication friendly, enabling environments. We consider wellbeing and have a strong emphasis on individual enquiry within our curriculum, where play = learning.

### **6. Planning**

Evaluation, assessment, and observations are used to inform planning. All practitioners (EYFS Leader, teachers, room leaders, key carers and LSAs) contribute to future planning which seeks to ensure access to a broad range of experiences, which meet the children's needs.

We do not make a distinction between play and work (play=learning), we achieve our aims via motivating environment and through a combination of adult-led and child-initiated opportunities. We incorporate key calendar events and celebrations, linked to children's culture and religions, 'in the moment' topics of interest, alongside flexible themes, as well as 'invitations to play.' All these aspects are skilfully prepared for the cohort's needs by the teachers and key carers. We value the contribution of all children and offer a safe, supportive learning environment to engage them.

### **7. Teaching**

Using a range of teaching strategies, the Early Years practitioners supporting children's learning, extending their knowledge, and understanding, helping them to gain confidence and develop skills.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a combination of adult-led and child-initiated opportunities. Staff respond to

each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through positive interactions.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning in year 1.

## **8. The Outside Classroom**

At AVA the outdoor learning is a fundamental part of the Early Years, and it has a positive impact on children's development. The outdoor environment offers children the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active thus developing many skills on a different scale compared to indoors.

We see the outdoor environment as an integral part of the learning environment and curriculum based learning opportunities are incorporated into the outdoor environment each day. Preschool and Reception have a separate outdoor garden and all of the children have free-flow access during the day. The continuous provision has a range of learning opportunities including a mud kitchen, sand and water play, role play/ stage area, loose parts, balancing equipment, large scale construction, wheeled vehicles and literacy and mathematics opportunities. As with all areas of the provision in EYFS the outdoor environment is both a teaching and learning environment where there is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning.

## **9. Experiences**

We aim to provide a wide variety of experiences throughout the year which are well resourced. Opportunities are developed to reflect children's interests and to fulfil specific learning objectives as appropriate. Visits and visitors are also used to enhance provision as appropriate and provide unique learning experiences.

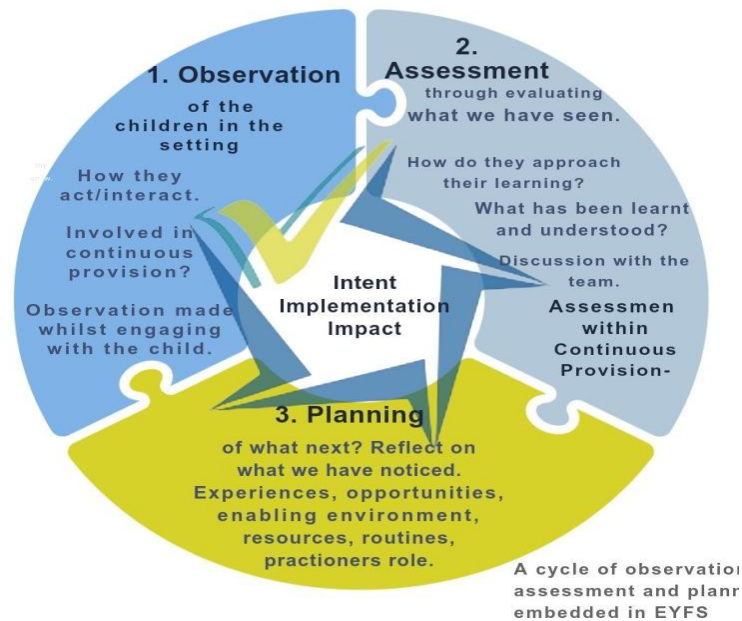
## **Impact**

### **10. Evaluation and Assessment**

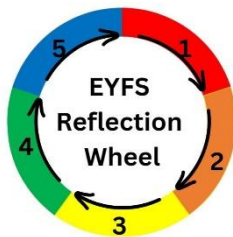
Evaluation and assessment are key tools which enable us to plan and deliver the Foundation Stage Curriculum. We work with parents/carers to establish a baseline of learning for all children entering our setting in both Preschool and Reception. We then use this baseline to adapt our curriculum to stretch and strengthen existing knowledge and skills.

For children entering Reception we use the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) alongside our own observations to assess children on their entry.

Assessment information is updated regularly using either their online Learning Journey – Evidence Me in Reception and individual tracking grids in Pre-school. These are shared with parents as part of the Parent Partnership. In Preschool, a termly newsletter is sent home to keep parents updated with all of the learning that term. All learning within the Foundation stage is carefully evaluated and assessed by observation and discussion, written, physical, photographic, and recorded evidence.



Activities are evaluated on completion regarding fulfilment of learning objectives and children’s progress is monitored. This information is then used to inform future planning. Where appropriate, work is marked in line with the whole school feedback policy.



Children also have the opportunity to reflect on their own learning, incorporating the Academy Reflection Wheel. Children begin in Reception during small adult-led groups. The importance of developing these skills builds resilience in tasks and allows autonomy over their ideas for self-assessment.

## 11. Parent Partnership

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. Parents/carers play a key role in children’s development, and it is essential for us to have a strong partnership with the people caring for children at home to ensure each child reaches their full potential. We encourage parents and carers to make contributions and share information about their child’s learning and development throughout the year.

Parents/carers are kept up to date with their child’s progress and development. The 2-year-old progress check and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) help to provide parents/carers with a well-round picture of their child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities.

In Preschool each child is assigned a key carer who helps ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key carer supports parents/carers in guiding their child’s development at home. In Reception this is the class teacher, with support from the Learning support assistant, who is a Key Practitioner.

We aim to strengthen our parent/carer partnerships by:

- Providing Stay and Play sessions for Preschool and Reception transition times.
- Inviting parents/carers in for workshops.
- Distributing newsletters.
- Access to the Primary Phase pastoral team.
- Organising events throughout the year, where parents are encouraged to join us in school.
- Offering parent questionnaires and responding to essential feedback
- Liaising with the Children's Centre.
- Working with outside agencies to support children/ families with additional needs

## **12. Health and Safety**

Staff in EYFS have either Paediatric First Aid Training or First Aid in school training. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. They are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety issues. Risk assessments are undertaken for all key areas and before we embark on any off site visits.

## **13. Snack time**

Snack time is used to encourage children to listen to their own bodies and decide when they are hungry or thirsty. Children can make the decision when to have their snack. Snack time is an ideal opportunity to develop and enhance the children's social skills and to support our ethos of being a healthy school with healthy snacks. All children are seated whilst they eat. An adult is always present during these times to support peeling fruit, pouring drinks and ensure safe eating.

## **14. Transition between Year Groups**

### **Preschool**

The 2–4-year-olds share a learning environment and free flow together inside and outside. Staff spend time with parents completing transition documents and building relationships through getting to know the children. Children are invited to settling-in sessions, and we ensure each child has a good start by always referring to the unique child and their individual needs.

### **Preschool to Reception**

Transition from Preschool into Reception begins in the Autumn term, the year before a child is due to start and when school applications are completed. Parents have the opportunity to look around the Early Years setting and across the rest of the school.

During the Summer term, Preschool, 3–4-year-olds and new admissions into Reception have stay and play opportunities in the Reception learning environment. They will then have the opportunity to meet and make friendships with the children joining from other nurseries. This provides them with the opportunity to get to know the staff, environment, and routines in Reception.

We offer a 'Welcome to AVA' meeting for Reception parent/carers in the summer term. In the Autumn, parents/ carers will have a 1:1 meeting with the class teacher, completing

transition documents into school. This will be an opportunity to share further information and a chance for the child to spend time with the class Key practitioner.

### **Reception to Year 1**

Over the course of the year Reception children make use of primary school facilities such as the hall, library, learning resources area, and KS1 playground. In the Summer term Reception children have opportunity to visit the Year 1 classrooms to get to know the environment and introduce them to some class routines.

At the end of each school year, teachers and practitioners meet to share information on each child with their new class teacher/ key person. This will include end of year assessment data and helps to build a picture the children for their next steps in learning.

## **15. Staffing Ratios**

Staffing ratios at AVA are in line with statutory guidance effective 01 September 2025 – this includes staff qualifications, training, support and skills

## **16. Inclusion**

All pupils at Aylesbury Vale Academy are entitled to a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum regardless of ability, gender, race and social circumstances. Both more able children and those with Special Educational Needs are considered, and the curriculum is adapted to suit all levels of ability. Care is taken to assess the needs of each child from Preschool age onwards. Should a child have any special need parent are informed at an early stage. Group and individual help is provided within the school where possible through targeted interventions. Further details are outlined in our Inclusion Policy available on the school website.

## **17. Equal Opportunities**

Our Equal opportunities information can be found in our Annual Equality information and Objective’s report available on the school website.

### **Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS**

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
<b>Safeguarding policy and procedures</b>	See child protection and safeguarding policy See Intimate care policy
<b>Special Educational Needs</b>	Our Special Educational Needs procedures are outlined in our SEND policy
<b>Procedure for responding to illness</b>	See health and safety policy
<b>Administering medicines policy</b>	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
<b>Emergency evacuation procedure</b>	See health and safety policy
<b>Procedure for checking the identity of visitors</b>	See child protection and safeguarding policy

<b>Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children</b>	See Preschool Admissions Policy Safeguarding Policy
<b>Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints</b>	See complaints policy
<b>Monitoring Arrangements</b>	This policy will be reviewed and approved by the governing body every year