

## **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY**

**"A big journey starts with a little step"**

### **1. Introduction:**

At Edison International Academy, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their 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. This policy outlines the purpose and nature of Early Years Education at Edison International Academy.

### **2. Rationale:**

Children develop rapidly during the Early Years Foundation Stage - socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually – and each child is entitled to provision that supports and extends knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence.

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is a valid stage of learning in itself, not simply a preparation for the next stage of education.
- Personal, social and emotional well-being is the basis for successful learning and development.
- The whole child is important; social, emotional, physical and intellectual developments are inter-related.
- Young children do not learn in subjects. Learning is holistic.
- Children develop individually and at their own rates and need to be given time to move through the developmental stages at their own pace.
- Observation and monitoring of children's progress is vital. It informs the planning of the next steps forward for each child and is essential for the early identification of those with special needs.
- Children learn best when they are in control and therefore need to be given the opportunity to be responsible for their own learning.
- Children need a stimulating and challenging environment, both indoors and outdoors, in which to develop. In particular it should promote personal and social skills and support the acquisition and development of language.
- Children find abstract learning difficult. They need experience of doing things, handling objects and exploring the physical and social world before they are ready to understand abstract concepts.
- Children learn best when they are actively involved where situations make 'human sense' to them. Therefore children should have the opportunity to learn through first-hand experience. Planning should be based on individual children's interests and their needs
- Adults should display positive attitudes to all of the children and to each other to promote high self-esteem and make children feel valued.

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- Parents are recognised as a child's first educator, even before they start in a setting.

### **3. A Principled approach**

EYFS principles which guide the work of all practitioners are grouped into four distinctive but complementary themes:

- a. The Unique Child:** Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable and self-assured.
- b. Positive Relationships:** Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents.
- c. Enabling Environments:** The environment plays a key role in supporting a child's development.
- d. Learning and Development:** Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. All areas of learning are equally important and interconnected.

Our aims reflect these principles

### **4. Our Aims**

To develop the child personally, socially and emotionally by:

- Planning for the needs and interests of each individual child (see curriculum and assessment policy)
- 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 a positive self- image increasing confidence, independence and control.
- Developing an awareness that there are similarities and differences among all groups of people but that all groups are equally important
- 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 cultures and languages
- Ensuring that their well-being and Involvement is monitored

### **5. Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The three characteristics of effective learning (as identified by the Tickell review of the EYFS curriculum 2011), and which are essential for children's holistic development are:

#### **Playing and exploring – engagement**

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know

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- Being willing to 'have a go'

#### Active learning – motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keep trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

#### Creating and thinking critically – thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

We organise our Preschool and Reception classes to ensure that we offer all children opportunities to explore these characteristics and in addition we will:

#### a. develop the child intellectually by:

- providing a stimulating environment in which each child can learn through hands-on promoting the use of language
- stimulating the child's curiosity
- giving opportunities for children to make their own decisions
- encouraging active learning
- encouraging self-evaluation

#### b. develop the child physically, 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.
- develop fine motor skills through activities such as modelling, painting and construction.
- to develop an awareness of their physical ability.

#### c. develop the child aesthetically and creatively 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 and art activities.

#### d. establish a smooth transition from home to school and develop a positive parent partnership model by:

- by adopting an admissions procedure that eases the transition from home to school, i.e. play visits to the setting
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## **6. Learning and Development**

A broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum is rooted in our child centred philosophy, 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 offer a well-planned indoor and outdoor curriculum.

Activities must be appropriate to meet the needs of the individual child. They must be flexible enough to take account of individual diversity as well as be relevant to the individual child.

The **Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum** is organised into **7 areas of learning**:

### **3 'Prime' Areas:**

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2. Communication and Language
3. Physical Development

### **4 'Specific Areas:**

1. Literacy Development
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

"There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early year's settings. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected."

*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014*

## **7. Play**

"Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others."

*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014*

## **8. The Role of the Adults**

The professional team comprise of the Early Years class teachers and the teaching assistants. Others involved in the partnership are the Early Years Coordinators, the Principal, parents, and students.

The role of the professional team is to:

- plan the curriculum
- organise the learning environment
- interact with the children to extend their learning opportunities
- monitor and assess children's learning

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- record observations and assessments
- communicate with all involved
- meetings with the Foundation Stage team are held on a regular basis to establish agreed frameworks and common approaches

Adults in the Foundation Stage setting work together as a team. Teaching assistants work in partnership with the teachers and are an invaluable part of the professional team. Voluntary support from parents and other members of the community is welcomed.

### **9. The Role of the Key Worker**

"Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents."

*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014*

Naturally, that key person is almost exclusively the Class Teacher and the assigned Teaching Assistant, who will both ensure that the child settles well into the new environment and that open lines of communication with each child's parent are established.

### **10. Parent Involvement:**

The role that parents have played in the early education of their child needs to be valued and recognised. Their involvement is crucial to the development of children's future learning. Parents need to be involved in a positive partnership.

This partnership is developed by:

- making parents feel welcome in school.
- keeping parents informed prior to admission into both Preschool and Reception a meeting is held to explain procedures and routines and our philosophy on Early Education.
- involvement in home reading scheme in Reception classes
- involving parents in discussions on their child's progress during formal and informal meetings

### **11. Special Educational Needs**

Every child's needs are different, but when a child is having difficulty progressing in any aspect of their development in the classroom this is recognised.

We follow the whole school policy for special needs. The teacher, with the involvement of parents, will identify the child's needs and in collaboration with the school psychologist, the learning support teacher, and the Principal, will work towards meeting the child's provision as most appropriate. (see IEP policy)

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## **12. Inclusion**

As part of the larger school community we adopt the whole school policy for Inclusion, Equal Opportunities and Race Equality. The core values of our school emphasise the need to value and respect everyone in our community.

Our school policy states our intent to promote Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Race Equality.

### **Aims:**

- to be an inclusive school making equality of opportunity a reality for all of our children in their everyday lives.
- to develop the children's awareness of the pluralistic and diverse society in which we live. We will help them to learn positive attitudes and equip them to take their place within this society.
- to educate our children so that they have a good understanding of what equal opportunities means.
- to provide children with differing and appropriate levels of support for them to succeed.
- to eliminate any actions, words or practices that contribute to inequality whether they intend to or not.
- to develop children's appreciation of the positive and enriching experiences that can be gained from living and working in a multi-cultural society.

## **13. Review:**

This policy is subject to annual review.