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Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Date: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

This policy has been reviewed by the Early Years Lead to reflect the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective from 1 September 2026. Updates include strengthened safeguarding and suitability wording, alignment of the screen-use section with current Department for Education guidance, and a new section setting out the Early Years Lead's approach to quality assurance and continuous improvement.

This Policy should be read in line with the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints and Complaints Against Staff Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- PSHE policy
- Health and First Aid Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- All curriculum policies
- Intent, Implementation and Impact document for EYFS

Assessment and Monitoring in the EYFS:

At Independent Jewish Day School (IJDS), we will assess children on entry in order to build on the skills and knowledge they already have. This information is used to develop the children holistically and will ensure that all aspects of early childhood development are catered for.

The Reception Baseline Assessment takes place within the first 6 weeks of the academic year. Any children who may join the class at a later date will have their RBA completed within the first 2 weeks of their arrival.

Prior to joining the school, staff will speak to parents of new children and ask parents to complete a questionnaire about their child.

Once they have joined the school children will be monitored through Tapestry, planning and regular assessing. Termly Pupil progress meetings will be held with the Assessment Lead, Headteacher and EYFS lead to monitor progress for all pupils.

Equal Opportunities:

In order to meet children's very diverse needs and also in order to help them make the best progress possible, the Gan (Nursery) and Hachana (Reception) classes endeavour to "provide a safe and supportive learning environment free from harassment, in which the contribution of all children is valued and where racial, religious, disability and gender stereotypes are challenged." This is done within the parameters of the Modern Orthodox Jewish ethos of the school. We are an inclusive school and have children with Special Educational Needs and believe that early intervention and support is important. We have many children with English as an Additional Language and have weekly early morning accelerated learning sessions and daily intervention to support them to learn English as well as embrace their Mother tongue.

Safeguarding:

At the Independent Jewish Day School Gan, we work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. All children are treated with respect, are helped to thrive and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form. To this end we ensure that we:

- create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image, a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development;
- provide a safe and secure environment for all children;
- always listen to children;
- provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help they need and share information with other agencies as appropriate.

Our EYFS has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. All of our Early Years Staff have completed safeguarding training to enable them to recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect. EYFS staff are responsible for the safeguarding of the children within the Gan & Hachana classes and liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) in cases of concern. They then, in turn, will liaise with local statutory children's services agencies as appropriate. The Safeguarding Leads have completed additional Safeguarding and Child Protection training. Staff in the EYFS are paediatric First Aid trained.

E-Safety is very important and all children have E-Safety awareness training as part of the whole school E-Safety awareness week. They know that if they see something unusual on the iPad or computer screen they should ask an adult for help.

Prevent Duty:

Even very young children may be vulnerable to radicalisation by others, whether in the family or outside, and display concerning behaviour. At IJDS we do not carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life but as with any other safeguarding risk, we ensure that all staff report any concerning conversations to the DSLs.

Fundamental British Values:

Democracy: Making decisions together. As part of the focus on self-confidence and self-awareness as cited in Personal, Social and Emotional Development, staff encourage children to see their role in the bigger picture, encouraging them to know their views count, value each other's views and values and talk about their feelings, for example when they do or do not need help. When appropriate we demonstrate democracy in action, for example, children sharing views on what the theme of their role play area could be with a show of hands. Staff support the decisions that children make and provide activities that involve turn-taking, sharing and collaboration. Children are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued.

Rule of law: Understanding rules matter as cited in Personal, Social and Emotional development as part of the focus on managing feelings and behaviour: Staff at IJDS ensure that children understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequences, as well as learn to distinguish right from wrong. Staff collaborate with children to create the rules and the codes of behaviour, for example, to agree the rules about tidying up and ensure that all children understand rules apply to everyone.

Individual liberty: Freedom for all. As part of the focus on self-confidence & self- awareness and people & communities as cited in Personal Social and Emotional development and Understanding the World: Children are encouraged to develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example through allowing children to take risks on an obstacle course, mixing colours, talking about their experiences and learning. Staff encourage a range of experiences that allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are

free to have different opinions, for example in a small group discussing what they feel about transferring into the next class.

Mutual respect and tolerance: Treat others as you want to be treated. As part of the focus on people & communities, managing feelings & behaviour and making relationships as cited in Personal Social and Emotional development and Understanding the World: Staff create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures and races are valued and children are engaged with the wider community. Children are encouraged to acquire a tolerance and appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures; know about similarities and differences between themselves and others and among families, communities, cultures and traditions and share and discuss practices, celebrations and experiences. Staff regularly encourage and explain the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing and respecting others opinions. Staff promote diverse attitudes and challenge stereotypes, for example, sharing stories that reflect and value the diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping. Children learn about other Cultures and how they compare to our own, making them aware that it is important to respect other people.

Missing Children and non-collected children:

The welfare of the children in our care is paramount. EVERY member of staff has equal responsibility in ensuring the safety of the children and knowing where they are.

Prevention – There is very tight security at the main entrance to the school and security guards patrol the school regularly. There are CCTV cameras all around the school. The Gan & Hachana classes have their own playground and children are only allowed outside with the correct amount of staff ratio in place. The playground gates are secured when the children are outside. A member of staff is always in the classroom when children are present. A register is taken each morning and each afternoon and it is the responsibility of every member of staff to be aware of how many children are present and a quick head count takes place at intervals during each session.

If a child has not arrived at school by 9.00am and the parent has not notified the school why their child is absent, the school office will call the parents. If they are unable to reach the parents, they will email and call them again by 12pm. All the staff always take extra care to be aware of the children's whereabouts and ensure they know the boundaries of where they can and cannot go. Parents are advised of our security procedures and are given the opportunity to discuss any concerns, particularly if their child has an adventurous nature.

Parents are made aware of the need of supervision of children at all times especially of their responsibility to ensure their child's arrival and departure is noted by a member of staff. Regular head counts take place to ensure all children are present. At IJDS, parents are required to inform us if someone other than the normal people are collecting their child. If the staff are in doubt, the parent is called and needs to give permission for that person to take their child home.

All parents are required to give 4 emergency contact numbers for all children. The Gan will not release the child to an unauthorised person, even if the collection is late, unless an authorised person telephones to state that because of an emergency a different person will be collecting. The authorised person should give the name and address and a physical description of the unauthorised person and the teacher in charge should check this description before permitting the child to leave. A record will be kept of all children who are not collected by the due time. We note the dates, the time at which the child was collected,

who collected the child and the reason given. If any child is not collected within a reasonable time, Social Services may be contacted in order to protect the child.

Staff:

In line with the EYFS Statutory Framework, effective from 1st September 2026, the school will ensure that the required criminal record checks and suitability checks are completed before the staff begin work. Volunteers, including those who are supervised, will be subject to the required enhanced criminal record checks. Staff must inform the school of any information that may affect their suitability to work with children, in according with the school's Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding procedures.

Staff in the Early Years are experienced, trained and have the appropriate qualifications to ensure that the environment is nurturing, stimulating and carefully planned. The ratios of staff:children are always adherent to the Government guidance and best practice for Early Years settings. Staff regularly attend courses to help their professional development and enrich the children's learning.

Should there be any allegations made against the EYFS Staff, Ofsted and the LADO (Local Authority Designated Office) will be informed of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere) and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made.

Partnership with Parents:

"Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in an Early Years Setting, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning."

In the Early Years Department at IJDS, we endeavour to nurture a positive relationship with parents in a variety of ways. In the Summer before the new intake of Gan children begins, there is an open afternoon when parents and new children are invited in to meet staff and receive the Gan handbook and ask any questions they may have.

At either the end of the Summer term prior to the children starting Gan or Hachana, or at the beginning of their first term in these classes, there is a curriculum evening when parents are invited to hear about the curriculum that will be provided for their children over the forthcoming academic year. It is also an opportunity for parents to ask questions and raise issues that they have not raised previously. Hachana parents are invited to attend a 'helping your child to read' evening where they are introduced to the principles of Twinkl Phonics and Hebrew Reading.

Parents are encouraged to maintain a dialogue with the Early Years staff. This is reiterated in the Gan handbook introduction and reinforced at parent-teacher evenings which take place in the Winter and Spring Terms. Tapestry is used for all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents are invited to share their children's interests with the staff. This evidence is used to inform the planning in both Gan and Hachana each week. All children are encouraged to bring in items for Show & Tell/Talk Time during the week.

Reports are issued in Hachana and Gan at the end of the academic year.

Parents are invited to come in, be it to assist with different activities e.g. forest school, cooking, outings, guided reading and library or because they have particular skills or areas of expertise

which would be beneficial and interesting to share with the children. They are also invited to share in special religious activities, which their children are participating in, e.g. Kabbalat Shabbat, Model Seder, Assemblies, Graduations, Festival celebrations etc.

Parents are kept informed about different activities, etc. by Tapestry, weekly newsletters and emails with information about upcoming events.

Relevant learning activities and play activities, such as reading and sharing books, are continued at home. In Hachana, children are expected to read daily at home as well as complete Phonics and Kodesh homework weekly.

Toileting:

Where reasonably possible, children should be toilet trained before attending IJDS. However, we understand that accidents can happen and so, parents are asked to sign the Intimate Care document (see Intimate Care Policy) allowing staff to change children, whilst balancing privacy with safeguarding and support needs during this process.

Absences from School:

If children are unwell they should be kept at home and the school office informed by phone. A note is made on the register that staff can access to see why the child is off school.

In cases of sickness and diarrhoea, children should be kept at home until there has been a clear 24hrs.

In cases of a high temperature, 24hrs clear should be allowed before children are returned to school.

Lateness - If a child is brought to school after the registers have been sent to the office then the carer who is bringing the child in should go to the school office to have the child's attendance recorded.

If parents wish to request permission for their child to be away from school for any reason other than medical appointments e.g. family holiday, then these requests should be sent in writing to the Headteacher via the online Pupil Absence Request Form which can be obtained via the school office.

Transition:

At the end of the academic year, we provide transition opportunities for the children new to Gan, The Gan children going to Hachana and for the Hachana children who are going to Kitta Aleph (Year 1). Children visit their new classrooms and meet their new teachers.

During the second half of the Summer Term, the Hachana children will go to break with KS1, in order to acclimatise them to the area with older children playing there. This will help their transition into Kitta Aleph.

Children are welcomed by the staff and parents are invited to come into the classroom to settle the children into their new environment in order to make the transition from Gan to Hachana an easy time for them. They have been introduced to the format of lining up at lunch times during the previous year to facilitate this transition. Children with extra needs are given the opportunity to visit their classroom and teachers before the first day of term in order to acclimatise to their new environment.

The process of “Bringing in Gan” is carried out over as short a period as possible depending on the cohort. By the end of the first full week, we would hope to have all Gan children in school. Pupils staying for a full day is decided through a discussion with parents and staff. The increase of the pupils’ hours will be dependent on how the individual child is seen to be settling into their new environment.

Parents are requested to be easily contactable for those first couple of weeks to pick up their children should they be requested to do so in order that children’s fears can be allayed easily and the settling in process goes smoothly.

Transition from Hachana to Kitta Aleph is managed sensitively and children spend time in their new class, meet the teachers several times and meet the children from the current Kitta Aleph class who answer their questions and share their experience of Kitta Aleph with the Hachana children. The Hachana and Kitta Aleph teachers meet several times to discuss the children, their needs, and different learning styles in order to ensure smooth handover and transition.

Screen Use in EYFS:

At IJDS, screens are used cautiously, purposefully and only where they add clear value to children’s learning and/or development.

Following the Government’s updated advice regarding screen time, IJDS have implemented the following expectations in the EYFS:

- Screen time should be limited to children up to an hour a day, and less where possible. Staff will consider the child’s overall day and the possibility that screen time is also taking place at home.
- Screen time must be carefully planned, brief and linked to a specific learning or developmental purpose. Screen-free, interactive experiences and direct engagements with adults and other children must remain the priority.
- Children must not access screens alone or with other children, without adult co-engagement. A member of staff will remain actively involved, supporting discussion, language, thinking and interaction.
- This limit does not apply to screen-based assistive technologies for children with SEND
- All digital content should be:
    - checked to ensure it is suitable for early years children, prior to showing it to the children
    - slow-paced, repetitive and predictable - fast-paced, over-stimulating content needs to be avoided - this includes content which has a lot of cuts, movement and flashing on screen, complex audio with lots of fast-talking characters or overlapping music and dialogue, or complex plots
    - advert-free, as young children cannot discern between advertisements and other content
    - free of scrolling and autoplay features, to ensure children are not inadvertently exposed to inappropriate content or able to access content for longer than planned use - this includes algorithm-driven content, such as video platforms
- Screens must not be used in a passive or sedentary way, without any interaction or communication from staff.
- Screens can only be used for short periods of time, to protect children’s ability to focus and concentrate.
- Screens should not be used during snack times or to occupy children (including during periods of transition during the day) or to manage their behaviour.
- Screens must not displace sleep, physical activity, outdoor play, stories, conversation or high-quality adult-child interactions.

- Staff will model safe and purposeful use of technology and will work in partnership with parents, sharing the school's approach in an open and non-judgemental way.
- Photographs and videos will be kept to the minimum necessary for an identified purpose and shared with parents only through secure, approved systems, in line with the school's safeguarding and data protection procedures.

- The Early Years Lead will monitor practice and support staff to ensure that screen use remains appropriate, proportionate and consistent with current DfE guidance.

Early Years Leadership, Quality Assurance And Continuous Improvement

The Early Years Lead has responsibility for supporting a consistent, high-quality experience across Gan and Hachana. They will work alongside the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assessment Lead, SENDCo, safeguarding team and all EYFS practitioners to review provision, strengthen practice and ensure that children receive the support they need to make progress from their individual starting points.

Our approach to continuous improvement includes@

- Regular review of the indoor and outdoor learning environments to ensure that they are safe, inclusive, well-resourced and responsive to children's interests, needs and stages of development.
- Ongoing professional dialogue between practitioners, including opportunities to share effective practice, discuss children's learning and agree appropriate next steps.'
- Monitoring of planning, observations and assessment to ensure that these are purposeful and manageable, inform teaching and provision, and identify children who may need additional support or challenge.
- Timely discussion with the SENDCo and parents where a child may have an emerging need or require additional support. Early identification, appropriate adaptations and partnership with families are central to our approach.
- Regular consideration of the progress and experiences of different groups of children, including children with SEND and children who speak English as an additional language, so that barriers to participation and learning can be identified and addressed.
- A commitment to ongoing professional development. The Early Years Lead will identify training needs, share relevant updates and support staff to reflect on how current guidance and research can improve day-to-day practice.
- Partnership with parents and carers as knowledgeable contributors to their child's learning, wellbeing, interests and development.
- An annual review of this policy, and earlier review where statutory guidance or school practice changes, to ensure that it remains accurate and relevant.

The purpose of this leadership and quality-assurance approach is not to create unnecessary paperwork, but to ensure that professional knowledge, observation and reflective practice lead to meaningful improvements in children's experiences and outcomes.'

Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is for children from birth to the end of Hachana and is dovetailed into the National Curriculum at Key Stage One. IJDS is an Orthodox Jewish school and therefore the Curriculum in the Early Years is delivered and tailored to these requirements whilst yet retaining a breadth and balance. The Kodesh and Chol Curricula are completely integrated in the Gan and a Kodesh teacher spends time teaching Kodesh and

Hebrew reading in Hachana. Planning is integrated in Gan. The Curriculum is divided into three Prime Areas: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development and four Specific Areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding of the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development:
Children are provided with experiences and support which will help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others, respect for each other, social skills and a positive disposition to learn. Staff provide the children with support to help them develop emotional well-being. Each child is monitored to measure their progress and to see how they can be moved forward. Both in Gan and Hachana individual targets are set, some of which may be explained and negotiated with the individual child and others which are discussed and noted by staff and which will be achieved either by appropriately planned activities or else by careful adult supervision and attention. When one target is seen to be met the next one is set.

Communication and Language:
Children's learning and competence in communicating, speaking and listening, being read to and learning to read and write is supported and extended. Children are provided with opportunities and encouragement to develop their skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes and are supported to develop the confidence and dispositions to do so.

The children are continually reassured and encouraged so that they feel confident in themselves and their environment. This is vital to encouraging their skills of communication with their peers and the adults around them. Their environment is structured in such a way as to provide them with stimulating and challenging play resources which allow them to communicate ideas and feelings and develop relationships. There are signs, notices and books all around them and they are provided with opportunities for mark making in all the different areas.

Communication and Language is incorporated into all activities. Opportunities for stories, books both fiction and non-fiction, songs, rhymes, poetry, role-play and practical experiences are all part of day-to-day planning.

There are also opportunities "...for children to become aware of languages and writing systems other than English." The most prominent language is Hebrew as part of their Jewish studies. As there are many children with English as an additional Language in the school, we encourage parents of those children to share their language and culture with the class on a regular basis.

Any difficulties in a child's language development are noted and there is a close link with the SENCO in the school to provide specialist input in consultation with the parents.

Physical Development:
Physical development in the Foundation Stage is about improving skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. It helps children gain confidence and enables them to feel the positive benefits of being healthy and active.

Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage equipment and resources are provided that offer physical challenges. Children are given time to use a range of equipment and practise and develop new skills to support their gross and fine motor development.

Observations are made and based on these further sessions are planned. Increased independence is encouraged. As well as physical development taking place through daily

activities both indoors and outdoors, both classes have access to climbing frames daily. Hachana students receive dedicated PE lessons and take part in Forest School sessions during the Summer Term.

Children learn about healthy eating and the effect that exercise has on their bodies.

Literacy:
Children are exposed to rhyming and alliteration and listen to both Information and fiction books daily. They learn how to handle books and that print is read from top to bottom and left to right in English. They learn to segment and blend and the initial letter sounds and begin to read simple words and sentences. They give meaning to marks they make as they draw, paint and write and begin to break the flow of speech into words, linking sounds to letters and naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet. By the end of the Hachana, children have an understanding of punctuation and are beginning to write simple sentences, lists and captions.

Mathematics:
We encourage children's development in this area by using various approaches. Number is utilised and displayed throughout the indoor and outdoor classroom, using opportunities which match up with the outside world and where number would normally be incorporated e.g. numbers on houses outside. Stories, songs, games and imaginative play that incorporate number are all part of the planning of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Opportunities for sorting, matching, shape recognition, following patterns, sequencing, counting integrated into their play, measuring and activities which encourage spatial awareness combine to offer all the children in our care the best way forward in concrete mathematical development which is built on and developed in Hachana, where they are encouraged to carry out mathematical investigations.

Understanding of the World:
In this area of learning, children are developing the crucial knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world.

The focused activities which are planned to afford children the best opportunities of gaining an Understanding of the World offer them hands-on experiences which encourage exploration, observation, problem solving, prediction, critical thinking, decision making and discussion. These opportunities are offered both inside the classroom and outside. Beside the focused opportunities there are also the incidental ones which occur through the resources which are available and which the children are able to access freely.

Children have access to computers, iPads and programmable toys as well as a large range of technology in the classrooms.

The opportunities for Understanding of the World are integrated into the Jewish Studies Curriculum so that this area is fully developed and relevant to the children.

Expressive Arts and Design:
Creativity is fundamental to successful learning. Being creative enables children to make connections between one area of learning and another and so extend their understanding. Creativity involves children in initiating their own learning and making choices and decisions. This area of learning includes art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play.

The children in the Foundation Stage at IJDS are provided with a stimulating environment in which all their creative efforts are valued. A variety of tools and creative resources are

available to them and their efforts are encouraged and valued. There are role play areas set up both in the Indoor and Outdoor Classrooms.

Children learn about their Jewish heritage and culture through role play, songs and stories using their senses and a variety of media and materials.

Outdoor Play:
Both classes have free flow between the indoor and outdoor classrooms. The outdoor classrooms are carefully planned for and resourced to reflect the learning opportunities available within the indoor classroom, ensuring that the 7 areas of learning are taking place at all times throughout the school day. Children are encouraged to bring a coat and wellington boots to school so that they have the opportunity to go outdoors in all weather.