



**RIPLEY
COURT**
School

Early Years Policy

1. Statement

1.1. The Early Years age group defines children aged from birth until the 31st August following their fifth birthday, that go to an early years setting that delivers the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- Nursery 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 3 year olds
- Transition 3 – 4 year olds
- Reception 4 – 5 year olds

2. Introduction

2.1. As a school, our collective responsibility is to deliver a curriculum that is outstanding and inspiring, as such we intend to provide a curriculum that:

- Promotes a love for the challenge of learning
- Fosters curious, interested learners
- Encourages independence to seek new challenge
- Consolidates and deepens knowledge, skills and understanding

2.2. Our curriculum design is intended to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework: *for group and school-based providers* (September 2025) but also prepare children for the future. It supports children's social development and ensures that all children are happy, enjoy school, have fun learning and maximise their potential. We all share the same high expectations and ethos and our planning, marking and assessment provides support and guidance for all pupils to develop and achieve to the best of their ability. We recognise the importance of Early Years Education as the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives. Ripley Court School aims to develop each child to his or her full potential. Early Years education is concerned with the physical, social, and emotional, aesthetic, and cognitive development of the individual, with no one area standing in isolation from the others. Our practice is shaped by the following guiding principles:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development

3. Safeguarding and Welfare

- 3.1. In line with government guidance, please see the school Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy to understand how we ensure the health, safety, and security of our children. Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe, secure environment, and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures, and documents in place to ensure children's safety. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. We work collaboratively with parents/guardians and require parents/guardians to notify the School of any pre-existing injuries. These are recorded in SchoolBase.
- 3.2. School staff must not use any personal electronic device in the presence of children with the exception of an emergency situation. This includes the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities. Staff must be careful to ensure they never take or store images or audio of pupils on their personal devices. So called 'Smart Technology' (including items such as watches) must have all Bluetooth & Wi-Fi connective functionality disabled (e.g. by putting the device into Flight Mode).
- 3.3. Staff are not permitted to make or receive personal calls or texts, send or receive personal emails or access internet or social media during work time where children are present. Staff must ensure that mobile devices are out of sight (unless it is a school owned device being used for work purposes or in an emergency situation) and silent in the classroom or where children are present. Mobile devices must not be left on display. Staff must not use their personal devices (mobile phones/cameras/tablets/smart watches etc) to record images or audio of pupils.
- 3.4. Visitors to the School are welcome in the EYFS setting in accordance with the School's Safer Recruitment Policy, Visiting Speaker Policy, External Visits Policy and EYFS regulations. This includes occasional volunteers who may support some activities such as reading with pupils or accompanying educational visits for example. These volunteers are never left alone with children and always remain in the presence of appropriately qualified Ripley Court Staff.
- 3.5. The School employs a specialist in the teaching of dance, a specialist in the teaching of music, and a specialist in swimming coaching who have been awarded instructor status by the School. These specialists provide an extended opportunity for EYFS pupils to learn a range of dance disciplines as well as participate in recitals, and to receive high quality swimming coaching. Further details regarding Instructor Status can be found in Appendix 3.
- 3.6. Early Years pupils are able to attend wrap-around care from specialist third party provider, Après School. Staff operating these sessions are employed by Après School and are qualified, to ensure ratios are adhered to. Après School is Ofsted registered and offers policies and procedures specific to the care they offer.

4. Curriculum Design

4.1. At Ripley Court, our curriculum is underpinned by the following ethos and core values:

Perseverance, Aspiration, Curiosity, Kindness

4.2. These values are promoted through:

- Flexible high-quality teaching based on the individual needs and abilities of students
- Ensuring creativity of thought is utilised in all areas of the curriculum and wider school life
- Emphasising emotional and mental wellbeing in all members of the Ripley Court community
- Stimulating extra-curricular, and enrichment opportunities

5. A Unique Child

5.1. At Ripley Court School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured. Our curriculum experiences take a value led approach which ensures quality and consistency so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.

6. Inclusion

6.1. All children and their families are valued at Ripley Court School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the schools SENDCO (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-Ordinator) is called upon for further information and advice.

6.2. Ripley Court School asserts that all those within its community are of equal value and in both its internal and external dealings does not discriminate between individuals on any grounds other than ability for a particular place or position. The School will ensure that neither staff nor pupils are discriminated against, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

7. Positive Partnerships

7.1. All children work closely with the members of staff that make up the Early Years team and each child is also allocated a Key Person. The role of the Key Person is to:

- Ensure that learning and care is tailored to the child's individual needs.
- Help the children become familiar with the setting.
- Offer a settled relationship for the children.
- Engage and support parents in guiding their child's development at home.

- 7.2. During their time in both the Nursery and Reception, specific time is timetabled to allow children to learn through play in small groups each day to support their social, emotional, and academic learning.
- 7.3. Developing a positive relationship and secure attachment with the staff enables them to feel safe, and have their emotional needs supported. We recognise parents are the child's first and foremost educators and we work strongly to develop strong links with them. We do this by:
- Inviting parents into school before their child starts to discuss concerns/give information
 - Inviting parents to a review meeting shortly after their child has started
 - Holding a 'meet the teacher' session at the start of the year
 - Holding 2 parent evenings a year
 - Holding parent workshops to support their work at home
 - Providing 2 written reports
 - Encouraging home school reading books where parents can track and share reading progress
 - Using tapestry to update parents regularly about life in school.

8. Enabling environments

- 8.1. We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure, and challenged. We conduct daily inspections of our space to ensure they are clean and safe for the children. (See Appendix 1 for our daily checklist). The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.
- 8.2. At Ripley Court School, we believe that all children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors in the environment. We further believe that it is important to enable children to use the outside environment as a context for learning. Learning outside the classroom provides many benefits and experiences to children's learning and development. We believe it helps to develop the 'whole' child through giving meaning to learning. It also provides physical benefits through regular fresh air and exercise, as well as a chance to explore personal goals and limits both physically and mentally. By embracing outdoor learning, we offer a broad and balanced curriculum, make links to the wider community, and celebrate British values and citizenship. Outdoor learning allows children the freedom to explore and manage risks in a safe environment. Most importantly we are creating memories for life and offering 'lid free' learning! Our children have consistent access to the outdoors as well as weekly Forest School sessions.

9. Food and Drink

- 9.1. Children in the Early Years have a morning snack of fruit and water which they enjoy together. This is a time to model and discuss healthy eating and table manners. Lunch is provided for pupils every day in the dining room at 12 o'clock. The children are encouraged to eat a balanced plate as well as try new foods. The RSE curriculum used in the Early Years (Jigsaw) ensures that children are taught the importance of healthy eating, being physically active and making healthy choices.
- 9.2. Both snacks and lunch are prepared in the school kitchen and are served by Early Years staff who have undertaken Food Hygiene training. Staff adhere to appropriate hygiene measures and wear both gloves and protective aprons when serving lunch. In the lunch hall, children are assisted and supervised by Nursery staff in line with Early Years ratio requirements. Children in the Early Years will always be within sight and hearing of staff whilst eating. All food provided adheres to the Food and Nutrition policy which adopts the 'Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance' DFE (2025).
- 9.3. Allergies and intolerances related to food should be notified to the School promptly with information updated by parents as required. Arrangements for individual pupils will be made in discussion with parents, staff and the catering team. Further information is also available in the Food Allergy Policy.

10. Learning and Development

- 10.1. At Ripley Court School, we recognise children develop and learn in different ways. Effective learning and teaching is supported through:
- The understanding that staff have the knowledge of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching.
 - The range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication.
 - The carefully planned curriculum that helps children to achieve the ELG's (Early Learning Goals) at the end of the EYFS.
 - The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellect, physical, social, and emotional abilities.
 - The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop independence and self-management.
 - The support of learning with appropriate accessible space, facilities, and equipment both indoors and outdoors, including the safe and effective use of ICT.
 - The identification, through observations of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents.

11. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

- 11.1. Our curriculum is driven by a clear purpose – we value the process and aim for clear outcomes defined by the rationale. Our curriculum is shaped by the areas of learning and development and educational programs (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (January 2024)) with guidance from non-statutory documentation

(Development Matters). We are flexible and innovative in our approach and, as practitioners, will work to develop children's experiences and often research new learning together.

11.2. As a staff, we have developed overarching termly themes. These are used as guiding themes and prompts for discussion and learning opportunities. Ambitious goals have been designed for the seven areas of learning as well as key skills progression that guides a rich curriculum plan and learning experiences.

11.3. The Educational Programmes outlined in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (November 2024) provides a structure of learning opportunities through which we develop the various aspects of early education. These include:

Three prime areas:

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

Four specific areas:

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

11.4. At Ripley Court School, children meet learning opportunities within a happy, secure, and interesting environment through practical activity, enquiry, and purposeful play, with consolidation through practice, talk and reflection.

11.5. It is the responsibility of the Nursery manager and Reception class teacher, in conjunction with the Key Stage 1 teachers, Head of Little Court (including Nursery) and the Headmaster, to provide a curriculum that considers the ability of every child. Combining, where appropriate, the Early Years Curriculum and Key Stage 1 National Curriculum, so that by the end of Reception/Foundation stage the children will be fully prepared for learning at Key Stage 1.

12. Planning and Teaching

12.1. The teachers will plan and teach a balanced range of activities and experiences to cover the seven areas of learning. These experiences will stimulate children's interests and be mindful of the three characteristics of effective learning. When planning, teachers will reflect on the different rates at which children develop. They will use the progression of skills and ambitious goals to guide planning and interactions. They will seek further information, research and guidance grounded in child development to ensure all children individual needs are met. (See EYFS Goals and Skills).

13. Assessment & Reporting

- 13.1. Statutory Assessments are undertaken at the end of the Reception year. At Ripley Court School, we will conduct a brief baseline assessment during the first few weeks in the setting to build relationships, ascertain each child's strengths, areas for development, and key interests. These will be used to inform planning and guide our interactions.
- 13.2. In the final term of the Reception year, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is completed. This provides parents, carers, and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and ability. This is reported to parents using the end of academic year report. The primary purpose of the EYFS Profile assessment is to support a successful transition from the EYFS to Year 1. At the end of reception year, Year 1 teachers are provided with a copy during transition meetings. When requested, this data is also shared with the Local Authority.
- 13.3. Ongoing teacher assessments are undertaken to ascertain where children are and are not 'on track' with their learning using the school developed assessment checkpoints. These assessments are used to inform planning and identify where children may need support. Observations are documented to show 'wow' moments and key developmental stages using both tapestry and written proformas. Where a child is not 'on track', practitioners will record reflections detailing the child's next steps and the support provided in the setting. These reflections are reviewed regularly, and further guidance is sought from other professionals where necessary.
- 13.4. When transitioning to start in the Nursery, discussions are held with parents to ascertain the completion of the child's Two-Year check and attendance at a prior setting. Within the first three weeks in the Nursery, either the two-year check or an initial baseline assessment report is created in conjunction with the parents/guardians.

14. Curriculum Timetable

- 14.1. Where appropriate, the Foundation Stage curriculum is developed within a cross-curricular context to take account of and be responsive towards, interests that are observed in the children, for example any notable events of significant weather or seasonal changes.
- 14.2. To utilise good practice and to help prepare the children for the introduction of Literacy and Numeracy in Year 1, whole class or small group Literacy and Numeracy teaching takes place each day including extended provision with adult initiated, and child led activities.
- 14.3. Phonics is taught daily following the school prescribed Systematic Synthetic Phonics Program with a phonetically decodable reading scheme to support this learning.
- 14.4. Children partake in curriculum enrichment lessons for:

Nursery & Transition	Reception
➤ French	➤ French

➤ Ballet ➤ Forest School ➤ Swimming ➤ Music ➤ Cooking	➤ Ballet ➤ Forest School ➤ Games ➤ Swimming ➤ Music ➤ Cooking
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15. Moving Up

- 15.1. Careful consideration is taken when children transition between classes in the EYFS and beyond. When moving from the Nursery to the Reception classroom in Little Court, children take part in many transition events. These take the form of morning taster sessions with parents and carers, stay and play sessions, as well as more formal 'move up mornings'. In the summer term, in the Nursery, time is taken to understand the concept of moving on and growing up. Activities are planned to explore this concept with the children and time is taken to create a seamless transition. When transitioning from the EYFS to KS1, similar regard is taken; the children have the opportunity to meet their class teacher as well as spend time in their new environment. Staff prepare for these transitional times through professional dialogue. Meetings are held to discuss developmental needs, individual interests and assessment information. When moving from EYFS and into KS1, the Year 1 teachers will also receive a written report and EYFSP data.

16. Staff training and support

- 16.1. Staff selected to work in Early Years meet the qualification requirements (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-qualifications-achieved-in-england>).
- 16.2. All staff who join Ripley Court School receive an induction appropriate to their role. This includes information on emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding and child protection, and health and safety issues. A programme of staff training throughout the academic year covers other topics such as paediatric first aid, critical incidents, equality and diversity, mental wellbeing, adverse childhood experiences, food hygiene etc. which relate to the roles undertaken.
- 16.3. Staff supervision provides opportunities for staff to discuss issues, particularly in relation to children's development, wellbeing or protection; identify solutions to address issues as they arise and to receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness. It should be noted that these opportunities are not linked to the appraisal process but can be useful in identifying additional CPD options for staff. The Head of Little Court (including Nursery) tracks qualifications and training needs through the appraisal process and links these to the cohort's needs as part of the School's overall package of staff training and support.

- 16.4. Weekly group meetings are held to discuss welfare, health and safety, learning and development of pupils. Staff meet at least once each half-term on a one-to-one basis with the Head of Little Court (including Nursery) for a supervision meeting; this is an opportunity to share any additional information they may wish the Head of Little Court (including Nursery) to be aware of.
- 16.5. In addition to these scheduled meetings and the requirement to share any safeguarding concerns, in line with the School's policies and procedures for Safeguarding and Child Protection, low level concerns and whistleblowing, staff are reminded that they have a responsibility to request a one to one meeting immediately and not wait for a scheduled meeting if they feel there is any reason why either they themselves or any other adult in the setting is not able to fulfil their responsibility to care for and educate children safely.
- 16.6. If staff have any concern they cannot discuss with the Head of Little Court (including Nursery), they should raise the concern with the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Headmaster, immediately.
- 16.7. Any allegations against staff should be reported in line with the procedures set out in the Low Level Concerns Policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 16.8. All staff have an obligation to engage with the Line Management process against the relevant teaching standards and the option to engage with individual development programmes as a supporting context to enable their professional development.
- 16.9. To ensure consistency in logging supervision meetings, we use a specific form. A copy of this form can be found in Appendix 2.
17. This policy should be read with reference to the following documents:

- Academic Policy
- Creating, Using, Sharing and Storing Images of Children Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- EAL Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils
- Equal Opportunities Policy for Staff
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Staff Induction Policy
- Touch & Physical Intervention Policy
- EYFS Goals and Skills

Compiled by: Head of Little Court (including Nursery)	Revision Number: 7 (Summer Term 2026/5)
Approved by: Education & Pastoral Committee	Next Revision date: Summer Term 2027

Revision History Table

Revision Number	Section/Paragraph number	Amendments
7 – Summer 2026	1.2	Deleted
	2.2	Updated reference to latest regulations
	3.6	New
	9.2	Final sentence added

Appendix 1 – Daily Cleaning Checklist

Week Beginning:							
Area	Frequency	Method of Cleaning	M	Tu	W	Th	Fri
Tabletops							
Indoor Resources							
Wooden construction toys							
Plastic construction toys							
Tabletop games							
Jigsaw Puzzles							
Plastic resources and toys							
Wooden resources and toys							
Tuff Trays							
Multi purpose easels Aprons Pens, paintbrushes, pots, trays, sponges etc							
Water and Sand Trays							
Sand							
Water							

Alternatives to sand and water – beads/stones/rice							
Sand and water toys							
Role Play							
Electronic Resources							
Stationary							
Pens, pencils, whiteboard, pens, felt tips, rules, crayons etc							
Outdoor Equipment							
Bikes, scooters etc							
Large plastic construction toys							
Tuff Trays							
Further Action Required:							

Appendix 2 – Staff Supervision

Supervision will support and strengthen the safeguarding culture we are committed to for our setting. Ripley Court Early Years setting aims to provide appropriate, responsive, and flexible services for all the children in our care.

We can only do this if our staff:

- Understand what is expected of them
- Have the skills, knowledge, behaviours, values, and attitudes necessary to carry out their role
- Are fully supported in their work and managed effectively.

Supervision is one of the ways that this can be achieved. Supervision will always keep a focus on the best interests of the children in the setting and promote their safety and wellbeing.

Purpose of Supervision:

The EYFS introduces the concept of supervision as a way for staff to discuss issues including child protection concerns and identify solutions as well as to receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness. Supervision will be an individual or group meeting between a manager and each staff member, in order to support their role as key persons working with children and their families. Supervision is a means to ensure staff are clear about what their job is, what the school wants them to do regarding concerns about particular children and to be supported in all aspects of their job. The meeting gives parties the opportunity to evaluate and review workloads and performance so that learning and development can take place and to identify performance shortfalls, encourage and motivate staff and initiate training, support and /or coaching. Supervision does not replace the annual staff appraisals.

Process and Frequency:

The frequency of meetings will be determined according to the needs of the families and the staff member supporting them. This is in addition to regular staff appraisal and other opportunities for staff training. Supervision is an essential part of the effective working relationship between a member of staff and a manager. The meetings are a two way discussion between a member of staff and their manager and to be effective each person must take an equal responsibility for ensuring effective communication and cooperation and recognition of the value of supervision meetings for both parties.

What to cover at supervision meeting:

The content of the supervision meeting will be to:

- identify any performance concerns and improvements required
- discuss any issues of concern about particular children and families
- identify appropriate support and guidance with regard to all aspects of work including support in dealing with particular children and families and their individual needs
- identify any training and development needs

Supervision Standards

Staff should expect: • To be given clear objectives and standards, appropriate deadlines and help in achieving their objectives. • To be able to question how things are done and what is expected. • To be given the opportunity and time to be express any concerns. • To be given appropriate support, and receive coaching where necessary.	The Manager should expect: • To have their management responsibilities understood and respected by the staff they manage. That once targets and/or objectives are set the member of staff will produce work to an agreed standard. • That staff will demonstrate a willingness to strive for continuous improvements. • That staff will be open, honest and non-defensive when their work is being discussed.
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Recording supervision meetings:

The supervision meeting will be recorded by the manager within 5 working days. Both parties will sign the record and agree the date for the next supervision meeting. A copy of the supervision record will be given to the member of staff and stored in the EYFS onedrive. To ensure that the confidentiality and identity of individual children is maintained within the supervision record, no names of the children discussed will be used, only initials.

Guidance on the Content of Supervision Meetings:

Supervision meetings should have a pre-agreed agenda.

Each agenda must include the following:

- Matters arising from previous meeting (if not covered in the agenda)
- Children and families– development and wellbeing including child protection concerns
- Discussion of role, responsibilities and any support required
- Any concerns held by the Supervisee
- Supervision meetings may also cover the following as and when required or relevant
- Review of children's records eg learning journeys etc
- Tracking and progress
- Transition to the next class/phase (Trinity Term)
- Progress towards supervisee appraisal targets
- Policy updates
- Upcoming events

Supervisee will email a suggested agenda to the Supervisor before the meeting for them to add to if needed.

Supervision Meeting Record			
Supervisor:		Date:	
Supervisee:		Location:	

Agenda:

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Main Points of Discussion:

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Follow up actions:

Supervisor:	Supervisee:

Signed:

Appendix 3 – Instructor Status

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers includes provision for a School to award “Instructor Status” to an individual.

“An instructor is a person at the school who provides education which consists of instruction in any art of skill, or in any subject or group of subjects, in circumstances where: (a) special qualifications or experience or both are required for such instruction; and (b) the person or body of persons responsible for the management of the School is satisfied as to the qualifications or experience (or both) of the person providing education.”

Ripley Court School has awarded Instructor Status to the following individuals based on the above conditions:

Ms Kelly Williams	Dance	Based on experience in dance. Agreed by Governing Body, Spring 2024.
Mrs Kim Ballantine	Swimming	Based on experience and training in swimming coaching. Agreed by Education & Pastoral Committee, Summer 2024.
Mr Sam Lom-Bor	Music	Based on experience in teaching music and holder of Masters in Music. Agreed by Education & Pastoral Committee, Summer 2025.