



# **NORTH WEST LONDON JEWISH DAY SCHOOL**

## **EARLY YEARS POLICY**

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## Early Years Policy

### Principles in Early Childhood Education

Our prime objective at North West London Jewish Day School is to meet the individual needs of all the children to enable them to get the best possible start in life. We have a strong parental partnership and work with parents to support their children and ensure that the Early Year's Foundation Stage Curriculum is delivered through play based activities, giving the children the opportunity to become independent learners

The emotional needs of each child are recognised and met in order to enable the child to develop social and interpersonal skills, positive relationships with the adults around them and with their peers. The parental partnership with school is paramount to support the children's learning. This combination lays the foundations for learning. *The importance and value of play as a tool for all aspects of learning underpins these principles.*

### Aims of the Early Years Department

We want the children in our care to be happy, confident, caring and kind and to develop a positive self-image and confidence in their ability to do things in order that they can go forward, each achieving their individual potential. This is reinforced using examples from the Torah and thus reinforcing the relevance of Judaism in their day-to-day lives.

The activities and experiences on offer to the children are carefully planned in order to help them progress in their development and learning as individuals with their individual needs. This extends into different areas and in various ways:

- Personally, socially and emotionally helping the child to feel valued as part of the class so that a good self-image and strong self-esteem are built up which supports them in settling into the class and later moving on to the next stage.
- The promotion of positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning so that they develop the confidence to be "successful and independent learners".
- The provision of opportunities for learning the skills of cooperating with and listening to each other in their day to day interaction.
- The development of their individual attention skills so that they are prepared to concentrate on their own individual play as well as group activities.
- Language and communication: The development of communication skills for all children in an increasingly wide variety of situations so that they are able to interact with adults and peers, extend their vocabulary and learn to listen carefully.

- Reading and writing

It is also one of the strengths of the NWLJDS that the Foundation Stage Department is not only housed in the same building as the main school but considered an important part of it. Thus the children of the Foundation Stage regularly attend main assemblies as deemed suitable and other gatherings with the main school, sometimes for only part of the time but on occasion for the whole time. Obviously this is built up over the year and from Nursery to Reception. This fosters feelings of community and develops confidence and learning by example from the older children.

Nursery and Reception have monthly Kabbalat Shabbat (Sabbath) celebrations together and celebrate all the Chagim (Festivals) as an Early Year's Department where they sing songs and listen to stories related to the Chagim. Nursery have their own Kabbalat Shabbat celebrations each week and Reception attend Kabbalat Shabbat on Fridays with the Infant Department and share in the unique "Infant" atmosphere.

### **Equal Opportunities**

The policy of the Early Years Department is that 'Every Child Matters.' In order to meet children's very diverse needs and also in order to help them make the best progress possible, the Nursery and 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 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.

### **Safe Guarding**

At North West London Jewish Day School Nursery 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 Nursery 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. The Head of Early Years is responsible for the safeguarding of the children within the Nursery and liaises with the Designated Child Protection Officer in cases of concern. She

then in turn will liaise with local statutory children's services agencies as appropriate. The Head of Early Years has completed additional Safe Guarding and Child Protection training. E-Safety is very important and all children have E-Safety awareness training as part of the whole school E- Safety training awareness week and know that if they see something unusual on the iPad or computer screen they should ask an adult for help.

## **Fundamental British Values**

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. At North West Fundamental British Values are the same as Fundamental Jewish 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 North West ensure that children understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequences, and 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 Reception 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 other's 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 make Christmas cards for local Old Aged homes, learn about Chinese New Year and are aware that it is important to respect other people.

### **Prevent Duty**

Even very young children may be vulnerable to radicalisation by others, whether in the family or outside, and display concerning behaviour. At North West 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 Head of Early Years who in turn reports these concerns to the Teacher in charge of Safeguarding.

### **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 Nursery has its own entrance and playground and children are only allowed outside with the correct amount of staff ratio in place. The Nursery garden gates are secured when the children are in the playground. 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 9.45 am and the parent has not notified the school why their child is absent, the Nursery staff inform the school office who call the parents. If they are unable to reach the parents they call them again at 12pm. If they are still unable to contact them, the Police are then called. Key workers of new children always take extra care to be aware of their 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.

Children are always counted before going out to play and again when they are lining up to come back indoors. At North West parents are required to write the name of the person collecting their children on the Parents' Notice Board if someone other than the parent or carer is collecting the child. No child is allowed home with someone who is not on the list. 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 Nursery 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 have to be contacted in order to protect the child.

## **Independence**

We wish to promote the development of the children in our care in a variety of ways, physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. This is achieved by creating an atmosphere in which each child feels secure, confident, stimulated and happy.

Children are encouraged to be independent learners and have free access to both the indoor and outdoor classroom.

## **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 North West we endeavour to nurture a positive relationship with parents in a variety of ways. In the Summer before the new intake of Nursery children begins, there is an open afternoon when parents and new children are invited in to meet staff and receive the Nursery handbook and ask any questions they may have. The Nursery Practitioners visit the children at their Nurseries and Playgroups in the July, prior to them starting at North West and at home to enable them to get to know the children and to enable the children to settle in smoothly.

At the end of the Summer term 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. In September, Reception parents are invited to attend a 'helping your child to read' evening where they are introduced to the principles of Letters

and Sounds, Phonics and Reading Hebrew. Reception staff conduct Home visits for those children who join our Reception class and have not attended our Nursery.

Parents are encouraged to maintain a dialogue with the Early Years staff. This is reiterated in the Nursery handbook introduction and reinforced at parent teacher evenings which take place in the Winter and Spring Terms. Learning Journeys are kept for all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Focused observations are done on three children per week. Parents are informed of these findings as the observations with photographic evidence plus the Developmental Matters achieved as well as the Characteristics of Effective learning are placed in each child's Learning Journey. Parents are invited to share their children's interests with the staff. This evidence is used to inform the planning in both Nursery and Reception each week.

Reports are issued in Reception and in Nursery termly and at the end of the academic year.

Parents are invited to come in, be it to assist with different activities e.g. swimming, woodwork, 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 in to share in special religious activities, which their children are participating in, e.g. Kabbalat Shabbat, Practice Seder etc.

Parents are kept informed about different activities, etc. by display notices, weekly Newsletters and by staff working closely with class representatives to pass on information.

"Relevant learning activities and play activities, such as reading and sharing books, are continued at home."

### **Transition from Nursery to Reception**

Towards the end of the Summer Term in Nursery, the Nursery children go in small groups for visits to the Reception classroom in order to familiarise them with the environment and the new staff. The staff from Reception also visit the Nursery in order to meet the children and observe them.

Arrangements are made to pair up the children from Nursery with partners from the current year five class and the children are introduced and given opportunities before the end of the year to go into the main playground with them. This "Buddy" system is with a view to helping the Nursery children feel more secure in the main Playground environment ready for the Autumn Term and so that, should they feel the need for reassurance, their buddies will be there to assist them. It also has the added advantage of fostering the qualities of caring and responsibility towards others amongst the older children. This 'Buddy System' continues for the first few weeks of Reception so that the children feel safe in the playground.

The Reception children are staggered over a two week period with the youngest children and children with Special Educational Needs starting first. 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 Nursery to Reception an easy time for them. They have been introduced to the format of lining up in the Nursery Playground during the last half term of the previous year to facilitate this transition.

During the first two days of the Autumn term the Nursery is closed in order to allow Nursery staff to be available to carry out home visits.

The new Nursery children visit with their parents on an afternoon in the last half of the previous Summer term. The Nursery Hand-book has been sent out previously, together with a questionnaire about the children, which we ask the parents to return before this afternoon meeting. Thus any queries from the parents or from ourselves may be raised at this juncture.

The process of "Bringing in Nursery" is carried out over a three week period. The children are divided into groups of 6 and commence with the youngest first. The reasoning behind bringing in the youngest first is that this allows them some extra time with a smaller amount of children and more attention from the available adults. After the first group which commences at 8.45 am, each subsequent group is integrated with gaps of 2-3 days between them. The next group's starting time for their first day only is 9.20am in order to allow the children who are already there to come in and settle to play and their carers to leave. Staff will be available to give the new group appropriate attention without unsettling those already present. For the first five working days that the children come to Nursery they only attend for the morning sessions. After this period, extension of hours will be dependent on how the individual child is seen to be settling, and in discussion with staff.

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 Reception to Year 1 is managed sensitively and children spend time in their new class, meet the teachers several times and meet the children from the current Year 1 class who answer their questions and share their experience of Year 1 with the Reception children. The Reception and Year 1 teachers meet several times to discuss the children, their needs, different learning styles in order to ensure smooth handover and transition.

### **Observation and Assessment**

The Foundation Stage Curriculum identifies the Developmental Matters working towards the Early Learning Goals that will help practitioners in planning.



In both Nursery and Reception there is a systematic process for collecting observations of the children. As well as completing record sheets for focused activities, all practitioners complete observations. Observations each week on three focused children. This information is used to inform the following week's planning. In Reception this information is used to inform the Foundation Stage Profiles as well. Primary Target Tracker is used in both Nursery and Reception. We also do an Attainment on Entry Baseline Assessment in both Nursery and Reception within the first six weeks of the children starting. This year we are trialing the NFER baseline Assessment for Reception on behalf of the Government.

"Developmental Matters" show the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children need to learn during the Foundation Stage in order to achieve the early learning goals.

"Examples of what children do", will help practitioners to identify when individual or groups of children have achieved knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes, and to plan the next steps in children's learning.

## **Curriculum**

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is for children from birth to the end of Reception and is dovetailed into the National Curriculum at Key Stage One. NWLJDS 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 Nursery and a Kodesh teacher spends time teaching Kodesh and Hebrew reading in Reception. Planning is integrated in Nursery. 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 Nursery and Reception 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 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 use the Adventure playground daily and

receive dedicated PE lessons and have access to our swimming pool for 'weekly fun in the pool' sessions.

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 Reception term 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 Reception, 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 experience 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, programmable toys, cameras and story phones 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 North West 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. Children are encouraged to bring a coat and wellington boots to school so that they have the opportunity to go outdoors in all weather.

### **Absences from School**

If children are unwell they should be kept at home and the school office informed by phone. A brief note to the teacher is expected on their return.

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

In cases of 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.

## **Staff**

Staff in the Early Years are experienced, trained and have the appropriate qualifications to ensure that the environment is nurturing, stimulating and carefully planned. In the Nursery there is a qualified teacher plus two Nursery Practitioners. In Reception there are 2 Qualified teachers plus one Teaching Assistant. They regularly attend courses to help their professional development and enrich the children's learning.