Serenity School

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS Policy) 2026-27

Approved by:	COO
Policy Holder:	Headteacher
Date:	01/09/2026
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Introduction

Serenity School Croydon admits pupils across a 4 to 18 age range. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Serenity School Croydon relates to our Reception-aged pupils and provides high quality education and care for children within the Reception year, rather than from birth as in a nursery setting. Our EYFS provision complies with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: for group and school-based providers (DfE, 2026), which applies from 1 September 2026, and supports children to develop into confident, independent and motivated learners.

As a specialist SEND setting, Serenity School recognises that many children entering the Early Years phase may present with communication difficulties, sensory processing needs, delayed social development and emerging self-regulation skills. Our EYFS provision is therefore carefully adapted to ensure that teaching, routines, environments and interactions are responsive to individual developmental profiles and Education, Health and Care Plan outcomes.

This policy aligns with the school's ethos of Inclusion, Independence and Self Worth, ensuring all children are safeguarded, supported and challenged appropriately.

Aims

We aim to:

- Provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment where every child feels valued
- Deliver a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum based on children's developmental needs
- Prioritise the prime areas of learning, recognising their importance in securing future learning
- Promote purposeful play alongside adult guided learning
- Work in effective partnership with parents and carers as children's first educators
- Provide highly personalised support for pupils with SEND through structured routines, communication support and targeted intervention

The Learning and Development Framework

The EYFS curriculum is structured around the seven areas of learning as set out in the statutory framework.

Prime Areas

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Teaching in Reception balances child-initiated learning, structured adult led sessions and sustained shared thinking, ensuring children are well prepared for Year 1 while remaining developmentally appropriate.

Within Serenity School, particular emphasis is placed on the prime areas of learning as these underpin pupils' readiness to access wider learning. Communication rich environments, sensory informed provision, visual

supports, repetition, modelling and adult scaffolding are used consistently to enable children with SEND to engage successfully and build confidence.

Assessment and Planning

Assessment within Reception is purposeful, proportionate and informed by professional knowledge of the child.

- Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA): Completed within the first six weeks of entry to Reception, in line with statutory requirements.
- Ongoing formative assessment: Through observation, interaction and review of children's learning.
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP): Completed at the end of the Reception year.

Tapestry is used as an online learning journal to record learning and share progress with parents, supporting a collaborative approach.

Assessment information informs planning, identifies children who may require additional support and ensures timely intervention. For pupils with SEND, assessment also draws upon EHCP outcomes, therapist recommendations and individual developmental targets to ensure that planning remains sharply matched to need.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

Positive behaviour is promoted through consistent routines, clear expectations and strong relationships. Children are supported to:

- Develop self-regulation and emotional literacy
- Build respectful relationships
- Understand boundaries and consequences in an age-appropriate way

All behaviour support aligns with the EYFS framework's emphasis on emotional development and positive relationships.

As a specialist setting, Serenity School recognises that behaviour is often a form of communication. Staff therefore use co regulation, visual routines, sensory strategies and explicit modelling to support children in understanding expectations, expressing needs and developing increasing independence.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Serenity School meets all strengthened safeguarding and welfare requirements within the EYFS framework.

Key commitments include:

- Safeguarding: All staff receive regular safeguarding training and follow procedures in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026), reflecting the updated EYFS statutory framework's alignment with the Crime and Policing Act 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) oversees safeguarding practice. Where a child has limited or no spoken language, staff do not rely solely on verbal communication when assessing wellbeing, engagement, distress, safeguarding concerns, developmental progress, or the child's preferences and responses; alternative forms of communication, observation and professional judgement are used instead. In line

with the 2026 framework, allegations of harm (not only serious harm) involving anyone living, working or looking after children on the premises are reported to Ofsted.

- Safer Recruitment: Recruitment procedures include enhanced criminal records checks and mandatory employment references for staff and volunteers (including those who are supervised), in line with the 2026 EYFS requirements, and new employees do not commence employment before their check is received.

- Attendance and Absence: Robust procedures are in place for following up prolonged or unexplained absence, recognising this as a potential safeguarding concern.

- Health and Safety: Regular risk assessments are undertaken for indoor and outdoor environments, including consideration of pupils' sensory, communication and medical needs.

- First Aid: At least one person with a current paediatric first aid qualification is present at all times.

- Intimate Care and Privacy: Children's dignity and privacy are respected, with practices balanced carefully against safeguarding responsibilities.

- Staff Ratios: Statutory staff to child ratios applicable to school-based Reception provision are maintained consistently, with additional adult support deployed where pupils require higher levels of supervision or communication assistance.

- Screen Use: In line with the 2026 EYFS statutory framework, the school has regard to the DfE's screen use guidance for early years settings. Screen use in Reception is limited, purposeful and supervised, balanced against opportunities for active, sensory and communication-rich play, and adapted to individual pupils' sensory and communication needs.

Health and Wellbeing

The EYFS team promotes healthy lifestyles by:

- Providing nutritious meals and snacks in line with EYFS nutrition guidance
- Supporting personal hygiene and self-care routines
- Encouraging physical activity and outdoor learning daily

In addition, significant attention is given to emotional wellbeing, sensory regulation and the development of secure attachments so that children feel safe, settled and ready to learn.

Working in Partnership with Parents

We recognise the vital role parents and carers play in children's learning and development.

This partnership is strengthened through:

- Regular communication via Tapestry, meetings and newsletters
- Opportunities for parents to contribute to assessments
- Workshops and information sessions to support learning at home

For children with SEND, close collaboration with families is particularly important in ensuring consistency of communication approaches, behaviour strategies and independence targets between home and school.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Serenity School is committed to inclusive practice in line with the Equality Act 2010.

- Children with SEND are supported through early identification, individualised planning and close collaboration with families and professionals.
- Diversity is celebrated, and children are encouraged to develop respect for different cultures, beliefs and experiences.

Provision is carefully adapted through differentiated teaching, communication systems, sensory adjustments and targeted adult support to ensure all pupils can access learning successfully.

Continuous Professional Development

Staff engage in regular training to ensure practice reflects current statutory guidance, safeguarding expectations and best practice in early years education.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The EYFS provision is monitored and evaluated by the SLT and Early Years Lead through:

- Lesson visits and observations
- Assessment analysis
- Staff, parent and pupil feedback

Findings inform ongoing improvement and policy review, ensure that provision remains both developmentally appropriate and responsive to the specialist needs of Serenity pupils.

Conclusion

Serenity School is committed to providing a high quality EYFS provision that meets statutory requirements and supports every child to thrive academically, socially and emotionally, ensuring they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Through specialist SEND informed practice, personalised support and strong partnership working, the school ensures that all children are given the foundations they need to communicate, regulate, engage and learn successfully.