



# St. Luke's CEVA Primary Early Years Learning Policy

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## Purpose

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We at St Luke's CEVA Primary School and Nursery support the view of scientific evidence, child development work and brain studies, that young children learn best through play.

“The CHILD is the curriculum”

Play is the best means of learning for young children, as they are naturally drawn to it and want to get involved. They often seem most at ease when in a play situation. Lally (1991) talks in terms of play being the “perfect vehicle” because children are naturally motivated through it. She suggests that play can offer children opportunities to “explore and discover, construct, repeat and consolidate, represent, create, imagine and socialise.”

This approach to the Early Years Foundation Stage forms the basis of our practice and is at the heart of all we do at St Luke's CEVA Primary School and Nursery.



## Scope

St Luke's CEVA Primary School and Nursery is an inclusive school and Nursery where we offer a rich and stimulating learning environment in which children can reach their full potential. We encourage all our children to be creative and develop leadership skills through a mixture of independent and adult focus activities.

Through our partnership working with our parents we aim to support parents and carers in understanding the importance of play.

### The principles that underpin our practice

In order to create an environment which allows the children to develop as curious, explorative and creative learners, we believe that young children need:-

- Opportunities to play.
- A flexible approach to learning opportunities.
- Time to play with few interruptions; if children know they have time to pursue activities they will be more motivated to concentrate, persevere and be successful.
- Space, as movement is central to young children's development and learning.
- Opportunities and support to communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- Opportunities and support to work independently or in groups.
- Opportunities and support to enable them to think creatively and imaginatively.
- To express fears or relive anxious experiences in a safe environment.
- Opportunities to take risks and make mistakes.
- Opportunities for real life experiences.
- A wide range of activities and authentic/natural resources to choose both indoors and outdoors
- To be taught skills and knowledge and provided with opportunities to learn independently.
- Families and practitioners working together.
- A setting where all children's experiences are valued and reflected in the environment.



### The environment as 'The Third Teacher'

Learning environments at St Luke's CEVA Primary School and Nursery are organised, with a balance of experiences which facilitates shared thinking, including curiosity, exploration, experimentation and hypothesising. The children have access to all of the seven areas of learning across a range of areas of provision:

Prime Areas:  
Communication and Language  
Physical Development  
Personal, Social, Emotional Development

Specific Areas:  
Literacy  
Numeracy  
Understanding the World  
Expressive Arts and Design

Children move freely between indoors and outdoors making choices from child-initiated activities and adult focused activities. Our adult focus activities encompass all aspects of the framework and are planned to be exciting introductions to activities planned in the provision.

All resources are accessible, well-organised and labelled to enable children to be independent and replace after use. We have specific areas where children can build, make a mess, be quiet and reflective, concentrate, or be active and vigorous. We ensure that we use resources and equipment which reflect the diversity of traditions, cultures, beliefs and family. Interactive displays are used throughout the setting to simulate children's natural enquiry.



### Adult Focus Activities

At St Luke's, we strive to expose your children to all seven areas of the curriculum in a variety of ways. This is done through the activities and focus tasks we carefully plan, based around the children's interests and their next steps. All children are encouraged to engage in small group focus activities with their key person, where the real emphasis is on trying to make the sessions purposeful and enjoyable so that learning becomes a joy. Whilst the topics and themes will change every half term, the onus is on the development of skills. We use the Development Matters framework and our school developed Learning Aspirations, in order to assist in this aim so we are clear on where children have started, where they are currently and where we want to take them next.

#### Outdoor play:

Young children are active physically, they need space to move freely and spontaneously, and they are not yet at the stage of sitting quietly to do their learning for long periods of time, but at the moving about and exploring stage. Their motor development is at a crucial stage and the outdoors seems the most natural place to ensure children have plenty of space. We operate an open system – where the children are free to explore inside and outside throughout their session. We plan for the outside space, in the same way we do inside areas, to harness the richness of the whole setting and covering all areas of learning.

We believe the outdoor area is crucial; many children have limited opportunity to play outdoors in a safe and secure environment. We maintain a high standard of outdoor provision through these key points:

Where possible, outdoor resources are organised and labelled in a similar way to indoor resources so that children can make choices and tidy away easily.

The outdoor area is divided into areas for different activities/learning bays. The children have the opportunity to choose whether to play indoors or outdoors for a major part of the session. Adults outside are expected to interact with the children responding to opportunities as they arise whilst keeping an overview of safety considerations.

Adults value and are enthusiastic about learning outdoors in order to be strong role models and promote outdoor learning as a positive experience.

Staff reassure parents who are anxious about safety, and encourage appropriate clothing to keep warm and safe. As long as the children are dressed appropriately they play outdoors in all weathers.

All children are encouraged to take part in the full range of outdoor experiences.



## Assessment

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We follow the Early Years Development Matters Framework and our own school devised Curriculum and Curriculum Goals. We use our detailed knowledge of the children's achievements and best ways of learning to inform our planning. We also plan around core books. Every child has their own assessment portfolio which includes observations of learning (through evidence me iPad observations), work samples and an assessment tracker.

### **We complete regular assessments activities such as:-**

- Planning time for staff to observe children, find out their interests and areas where they like to work
- Planning time for staff to support individual children based on their unique needs. Grouping children together for planning the next steps.
- Making sure that all adults work with all children in order to gain a complete picture of the children's achievements.
- Using a systematic routine to review the records each term.
- Share assessment findings with parents regularly



## Responsibilities

### Adults:

We believe that in order for children to develop their thinking and their play, effective adult interaction is vital. At St Luke's, adults play alongside children, offering carefully thought out comments and questions in order to move the child's thinking on. Adult focused activities are often play based experiences with adults facilitating a variety of different language and experiences for the children to explore; these focus tasks are based on the children's interests within the environment.

### Adults are encouraged to:

- Make warm, sensitive relationships with children by taking time to tune into the children
- Show an interest in what children do and say in order to understand and value them as individuals
- Understand individual children's interests and ways of learning -Spend time listening to children and responding to their needs -Carefully model language that is developmentally appropriate for the child -Demonstrate sensitivity about when to join in play and when to retreat -Support children by providing strategies to deal with challenges
- Follow out agreed practices for developing sustained, shared thinking -Ensure that all activities are given the same status (indoor/outdoors) -Sensitively intervene in children's play by asking challenging questions to extend and develop children's play
- Plan experiences to meet the children's needs based on ongoing recorded observations and assessments
- Know and plan for their different responsibility each day
- Encourage the children to reflect on their learning

### **Working in Partnership with Parents**

*"Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning" QCA.*

### **How do we do this?**

- Staff show respect and understanding for the role of the parent in their child's education, working with parents of babies and upwards.
- Staff listen to parents accounts of their child's development and any concerns they have.
- Welcome time (15 min daily sessions) sessions are in place for parents to settle their child in and support them with their learning  
Arrangements for settling in are clear and flexible to give children time to become secure.





## The 'Curiosity Approach' at St. Luke's

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At St Luke's CEVA Primary School and Nursery we follow The Curiosity Approach.

“The Curiosity Approach is a modern-day approach to early childhood learning. It's a beautiful recipe book of wonderful ingredients, carefully mixed together with experience, passion and a love of early childhood.”

Children explore using authentic real resources that they may have experience with in their everyday life at home and around the world. We set up enchanting environments to create a world of magic and wonder for the children to have a home away from home as well as a magical enchanting land.

Children have curious minds and explore the environment, resources and activities with awe and wonder in their play as they build up valuable moments of deep play time.

The approach has a wide range of global inspirations and the children explore resources, activities and cultures from around the world. The setting is a treasure trove to encourage awe and wonder at every turn.

Both Reception and Nursery are set up to reflect the home environment and with natural colour tones. The children are able to see the treasure shine through and play is always at the centre of setting without the distraction of bright coloured decorations and resources.

Children's mindfulness and wellbeing is at the forefront of learning and children enjoy the calm home like environment filled with items from home and images of their families and pets displayed.

The around the world curriculum and the Curiosity Approach allow children to meet all of the aspects of the Early Years Foundations Stage Early Learning Goals whilst learning through deep play and displaying the Characteristics of Effective Learning in play and building experiences and knowledge for their future learning



## **Settling/Transition**

We aim for children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in our setting and to feel secure and comfortable with all staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners, with the child being able to benefit from what the setting has to offer.

We aim to support parents and other carers to help their children settle quickly and easily by giving consideration to the individual needs and circumstances of each child and their families.

### **The staff will work in partnership with parents to settle their child into the environment by:**

- Providing parents with relevant information regarding the policies and procedures
- Encouraging the parents and children to visit the setting during the weeks before an admission is planned
- Planning Home visits and stay and play sessions
- Welcoming parents to stay with their child during the first few weeks until the child feels settled and the parents feel comfortable about leaving their child. Settling in visits and introductory sessions are key to a smooth transition and to ensure good communication and information sharing between staff and parents
- Reassuring parents whose children seem to be taking a long time settling into the setting
- Encouraging parents, where appropriate, to separate themselves from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences
- Allocating a key person to each child and his/her family, before he/she starts to attend. The key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents during the settling in period, and throughout his/her time at the St Luke's, to ensure the family has a familiar contact person to assist with the settling in process
- Reviewing the nominated key person if the child is bonding with another member of staff to ensure the child's needs are supported
- Respecting the circumstances of all families, including those who are unable to stay for long periods of time in the setting and reassure them of their child's progress towards settling in

**We look forward to meeting you and your child!**

