

## **Our Vision** Achievement for all

**Our Mission**  
To fulfil this through developing every child's personality abilities and talents to the full, to be the best that they can be.

### **Right Respecting School**

Sandgate School is a Rights Respecting School and supports children's entitlements as expressed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Relevant rights for this policy include:

- Right 2:** Non-discrimination. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.
- Right 3:** The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.
- Right 6:** Survival and development. Children should survive and develop healthily.
- Right 28:** Right to education. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education of which they are capable.
- Right 29:** Goals of education. Children should develop their personality, talents, abilities to the fullest.

### **Equality Impact**

This policy promotes access for all students in the Early Years Stage and supports positive early interactions with the education system. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at Sandgate School are treated equally regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school.

### **Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Sandgate we recognise that children are not "School Ready" at this point, and so the Early Years methodology, underpinned by Sandgate Pre-Steps and the Sandgate Pedagogy Cycle, continues until each child is ready to move on to formal learning.

Children are directed to Sandgate School due to their Special Educational Need. This usually happens after the age of four, but some students may enter the school before their fourth birthday due to individual need and circumstance. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

We aim to ensure children develop well in enabling environments, with teaching that respects their individual needs, whilst promoting the Characteristics of Effective Learning. We follow the Statutory

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Framework for the EYFS (2025), ensuring our provision is based on:

**A unique child:** confident, resilient, capable and self-assured

**Positive relationships:** fostering independence and emotional security

**Enabling environments:** tailored to individual needs and responsive partnerships

**Learning and development:** recognising different ways and rates of learning

## A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted and personalised to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. We set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, as detailed in their EHCPs. We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children’s learning needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive, low-arousal learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of all children, considering SEND needs, gender, social and cultural backgrounds.
- Monitoring children’s progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to multiagency professionals) as necessary.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children’s needs are met.

## Enabling Environments

At Sandgate School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. We provide a safe, low arousal environment, which allows the children to be present in the space, confident, secure and available to learn.

The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment, which provide engaging opportunities which support the children’s Sensory Profile and EHCP focus.

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Play-based learning is important, and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff, that encourage a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

### Learning and Development

#### How we teach:

We aim to present a considered and informed view of the breadth and depth of the curriculum appropriate to the needs of each of our pupils. Our curriculum for the EYFS reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years' settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across **several** learning areas. They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three prime areas are:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas of learning are:

**Literacy**  
**Mathematics**  
**Understanding the world**  
**Expressive arts**

Our pupils EHCP's, communication targets and sensory profile needs are the key priorities of our curriculum. Throughout a pupil's time in the EYFS we present selected and sharply focused learning opportunities to maximise success. All areas of learning support pupil's sensory needs, and we devote a large amount of time to communication and communication programs, working closely with speech and language therapists, and these provide our foundation for our **literacy, language and communication sessions**.

There are daily opportunities for **reading, writing and number recognition**, whilst exploring the world through the Sandgate theme curriculum, in an appropriate way for each learning pathway. We provide ample physical movement **activities for** our students within a whole school day, including opportunities for the children to regulate emotionally and meet their vestibular and proprioception needs.

Outdoor Learning is weaved throughout the learning week, giving children the opportunity to visit a range of green spaces and environments in the local area. Through this we hope to help the children develop the tools to cope with change in routine and build up stamina, thus supporting parents to be able to access their local community.

#### Formative Assessment:

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Children’s development levels are assessed using Sandgate Pre-Steps, our own assessment tool informed by a differentiated version of Birth to Five Matters and created with the needs of SEND children in mind. Assessment is continuous, and is supported by teacher and practitioner assessments. Key learning is captured on the Evidence for Learning platform both within school and at home. Observations and assessments allow teachers to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, **to** adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We record each child’s level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging, Developing or Secure. We make regular assessments of children’s learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. Tracking grids are updated electronically every term. We share this information in the yearly report and twice a year at pupils’ EHCP Reviews.

Statutory Assessment:

We comply with participating in the statutory Reception Baseline Assessments for all reception aged pupils (unless deemed not appropriate by the head teacher for individual cases) and we complete Early Years foundation stage profiles in June for pupils moving into KS1. This information is shared with KS1 teachers, alongside sensory, communication and EYFS progress, to support a smooth transition.

Sandgate School has also developed pupil Personal Pathways – MEADOWS, SEAS & LAKES. These pathways ensure a focus on both sensory **needs-based** learning and academic achievement. All these assessments determine how we will engage each child. We focus sharply on assessments through Sandgate Pre-Steps, Sensory Profiling and Communication Programs - working closely with Speech and Language and Occupational Therapy.

Planning:

IEP’s, sensory action plans, communication targets and EYFS framework targets provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Teachers use bespoke schemes of work to support their planning for individual children.

Observations:

Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded on Evidence for Learning and share electronically with parents. Parents share observations from home.

**Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum **incorporate** the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

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**Playing and exploring: children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.** ‘Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations.

In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.’ Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

**Active learning: children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.**

‘Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.’ Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

**Creating and thinking critically: we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.**

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.” Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

### **Safeguarding, Welfare and Behaviour**

It is important to us that all children in the school are ‘safe’. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take **risks but** need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See our Safeguarding Policy) Where appropriate, a child who is displaying behaviours that challenge will be supported by a Positive Behaviour Support Plan written to address their particular needs. We also focus on individual learning attributes of each child and, where appropriate, follow a specific behaviour profile in order to maintain each child’s sense of safety.

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“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”

At Sandgate School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025. We understand that we are required to:

- promote good health, including oral health and preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs. Staff support children in understanding boundaries and making positive choices
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- Positive Behaviour Support Plans are implemented when needed to support individual children.
- Personal care is managed respectfully, maintaining dignity and promoting independence, in line with 2025 EYFS
- Pupil attendance, in line with 2025 EYFS is monitored closely with prompt follow-ups carried out on unexplained absence
- Pupils have at least two emergency contacts for each child, in line with 2025 EYFS
- Staff receive safeguarding training on induction and regular updates throughout the year. Training is refreshed at least every 2 years, with annual refreshers encouraged, in line with Annex C of the EYFS framework.
- The school has named Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) who takes overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.
- Concerns are recorded, followed up promptly, and shared with appropriate agencies where required (CPOMS)
- A whole school whistleblowing policy is in place, outlining internal and external routes for reporting concerns, promoting a culture of openness and accountability.
- All staff are subject to enhanced DBS checks, and we maintain up-to-date single central record.

### **Positive Relationships**

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At Sandgate we recognise that children learn to be strong independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families and any other agencies involved.

### Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle into their new class quickly and happily. Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum. This is an opportunity for staff to

- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Receive a welcome pack, with key photos, information and passwords to access Evidence for Learning and TEAMS

### Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

We do this through:

- having strong home/school links supported by a class teacher and familiar support staff, to support individual pupils needs, help the child and parent to become familiar with the setting and help to build a positive relationship between home and school.
- having an EYFS information page on the school website.
- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school. This may include attending the Sandgate Preschool Stay and Play group.
- giving children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transfer sessions;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents once a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Inviting parents to attend Annual Reviews/EHCP's during the school year.
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: school plays, coffee mornings, church services.
- giving written daily contact through home school diary/TEAMS as well as the acknowledgement that parents can ring and email school to contact key workers. Staff regularly email and ring parents to discuss key events or concerns.
- ensuring all parents know that their child's teacher and teaching assistant are their key workers  
providing support during a transition

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## Health and Safety

At Sandgate, we follow clear procedures to assess and manage risk, keeping children safe both in school and during outings. We comply fully with safeguarding and child protection policies in line with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025.

We ensure:

- A whole-school medicines policy is in place. Medicines (prescribed and non-prescribed) are only administered with written parental consent and clear medical guidance. Staff receive training when medical or technical knowledge is required.
- All pupils with medical conditions are clearly **identified**, and their needs **are displayed** securely in class areas for staff awareness.
- Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day, and dietary needs are recorded and followed.
- Each classroom has a snack and sink area to provide healthy snacks and drinks.
- In line with EYFS **Statutory** Framework 2025, Children are closely supervised while eating to prevent choking or allergic reactions.
- A first aid box is always accessible and incidents are logged on Cpoms by a first aider, checked by SLT member and if necessary the school nurse
- In line with EYFS Statutory Framework 2025, All staff included in ratio counts, including trainees, hold valid paediatric first aid certification, At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and must accompany children on outings. with training delivered by approved providers.
- Fire and emergency evacuation procedures are regularly reviewed and practiced.
- Our health and safety policy includes clear steps for identifying, reporting, and managing accidents, hazards, or faulty equipment.
- We follow a safe mobile phone and camera use policy, ensuring all images are stored securely and personal use is prohibited.
- All staff hold an enhanced DBS certificate.
- Staff wear practical clothing suited to working at children's level, including guidance on avoiding unsafe footwear like stilettos.
- In line with EYFS Statutory Framework 2025, timetabling, environment layout and staff training support ensure personal care routines are managed with a balance of privacy and appropriate supervision, ensuring both dignity and safety.
- Staff are up to date with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidelines. A copy is kept in class as a reminder to be vigilant and can be referred to at any time needed.

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## **Safe Sleep and Rest (Reception)**

In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework, children's health, safety, and wellbeing are promoted at all times. While children in Reception do not routinely sleep during the school day, suitable opportunities for rest will be provided where needed. Any child requiring sleep or rest will be appropriately supervised by qualified staff in a safe and comfortable environment. Individual needs will be discussed with parents/carers, and arrangements will be made to ensure children remain safe and their welfare is supported at all times.

## **Qualified Staff and High Quality Training**

At Sandgate, we believe in equality for all and there are clear procedures for staff inductions, roles and responsibilities and staff monitoring through:

- References for all staff are obtained before employment, in line with EYFS Framework 2025
- All staff complete induction training
- CPD tracked via Perspective with annual reviews
- Weekly team meetings and safeguarding updates
- Staff receive safeguarding training as per Annex C, with refreshers every year (as outlined in EYFS September 2025)
- Whistleblowing policy includes clear internal and external routes. (as outlined in EYFS September 2025)

## **Information, Records**

At Sandgate, we comply with data protection and ensure secure record-keeping. We ensure that personal data is held securely and that permissions are sort to ensure that parents and carers are in agreement to the use of their child's data being shared.

- EHCP and review documents stored securely
- Parental permission obtained for photo and data usage
- Photos and work deleted yearly unless required
- Staff trained in confidentiality and GDPR practices
- Class Ipad is used for Evidence for Learning online learning journey

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