

Longridge  
Towers School



# Early Years Foundation Stage

## Parental Handbook



At Longridge Towers, we focus on developing the whole child, encouraging them to reach their full potential. Each child is unique, learning in different ways and at different rates; our aim is to nurture resilience, capability and confidence. Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and staff. At school this is achieved through personalised learning in small class groups allowing the member of staff to focus on the needs of the individual. This caring environment with extensive grounds providing an outdoor classroom, together with many educational visits and experiences, lends itself to providing a very positive, stimulating and rich education for each child.



Longridge Towers Junior Department delivers personalised learning, development and care to help children get the best possible start in life. At three years old children may enter the school into the Early Years Foundation Stage (E.Y.F.S.); an important part of a child's learning. It is the foundation of a child's education process encompassing some of the most important child development and experiences of early skills with the environment playing a key role.

Our school is unique in atmosphere. We have a lot of fun with the children and the special Longridge atmosphere is created by staff who really care and go 'the extra mile' for our pupils.

There is no such thing as a typical day in E.Y.F.S. - every day is different and full of fresh challenges.



# Welcome to the Early Years Foundation Stage at Longridge Towers School



Your child is about to join our Early Years unit; this is a really important and exciting time for everybody. If this is your first child starting at school, it is probable that you may have many questions to ask. This handbook has been designed to answer some of your questions and to help prepare both you and your child for their first day but please do not hesitate to contact us at any time if you still have questions after reading this guide.

## Settling in...

Before your child begins at school you are warmly welcome to come and spend time in the classroom and to meet the staff. These transition sessions often ease the majority of concerns about how your child will settle.

Feeling anxious about leaving your child on their first day is perfectly normal and our open door policy allows you to stay in class with your child until you are comfortable to leave them. The settling in process varies from child to child. Please discuss any concerns which you may have with us and together, we will work out what is best for ensuring that your child is happy and settled.

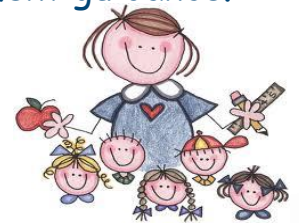
We ask parents/carers to complete a questionnaire about their child and his/her development as well as their likes and dislikes prior to joining us. This information is used to ease your child's transition into our setting. It is important to us that your child has a happy and successful start to their school life.

If you have any concerns, do not hesitate to contact us. We are here to help and reassure you.

## The Early Years Foundation Stage Staff

Mrs Sarah Maddock is the Head of the Junior Department at Longridge Towers School. Mrs Sandra Bullen is the Deputy Head of the Junior Department with responsibility for managing the Early Years. Mrs Sandra Bullen and Mrs Kate Brown are the Early Years Class Teachers. All staff working within the setting are qualified to work with children and have undertaken the necessary training to develop an understanding of the key issues of the E.Y.F.S.

At Longridge Towers School the correct adult/child ratios are upheld within the Foundation Stage. At all times there are at least two members of staff present and, whilst staffing ratios may change throughout the week depending upon the activity, the ratios are always well within the Government guidance.



In their role as the Early Years class teachers, Sandra and Kate are responsible for creating a special awareness of the needs of each individual child in her care. There are also classroom assistants who will be working alongside Sandra and Kate. It is a statutory requirement that children are assigned a key person; Sandra and Kate share the key person role for each child in Early Years but all the staff work closely together.

The staff will:

- Assist your child to settle into school life.
- Meet the emotional needs of your child offering comfort and reassurance if required.
- Conduct daily observations of your child and contribute to your child's record of achievement (Learning Journey).
- Relay all necessary information and build up a day to day rapport with parents/carers.

The staff at Longridge are a highly motivated, experienced and dedicated team all of whom have undergone enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Sandra Bullen is the designated Child Protection Officer for E.Y.F.S.

## The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage (E.Y.F.S.) is a statutory curriculum framework which starts at birth and continues until the end of the Reception year - from birth to five.



There are four key principles which underpin this curriculum:

**A unique child** - every child is a competent learner from birth and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

**Positive relationships** - children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and / or a key person.

**Enabling environments** - the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

**Learning and development** - children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates.

*"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right."*

(E.Y.F.S. Statutory Framework, December 2023)

Within the E.Y.F.S. curriculum there are three prime areas and four specific areas of learning and development:

**Prime Areas:**

**Communication and Language** - this helps children to discover language through talking, thinking and listening to others. The children are given the opportunity and encouragement to use their skills in a variety of situations and for different purposes. Children are encouraged to establish their own identities and personalities. Our weekly news sessions, using a 'speaker's chair', builds up their confidence within a comfortable and familiar setting

**Physical Development** - this gives the children the opportunity to develop their skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement. It encourages the development of both gross and fine motor skills through challenging and interesting situations. The children are encouraged to think about the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle. The woodland walkways and pathways allow children to develop healthy bodies and minds. Lessons are taught by Physical Education Specialists using the sports hall and the considerable grounds, including our walled garden. Basic principles of team play and team spirit are established focusing on cooperation and fair play. These life skills are developed through ball skills, gymnastics, dance, mini hockey, tennis, rounders, cricket and athletics. All children swim from September to June at Eyemouth Swimming Pool.

Parents will be informed of the days when swimming and P.E. lessons take place.



**Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - this helps children to feel good about themselves and others so that they are able to develop positive relationships. It supports children to become interested, excited and motivated learners. They are encouraged to work collaboratively and interests from home are valued and nurtured and form an important part of our child-centred curriculum. Children at Longridge are encouraged to form a high standard of good manners and respect for each other. Lunch in the dining room with the other Junior children fosters social interaction and reinforces table manners. At our weekly whole department assembly, successes are celebrated with children sharing their achievements; regular 'Show and Tell' assemblies encourage children to articulate their thoughts about a chosen possession or event.

### **Specific Areas:**

#### **Literacy**

To support children in their early reading and writing they are encouraged to mark make, enjoy stories, rhymes and link sounds and letters. A writing area, a quiet reading area and a role play area are all available to enable the children to develop their sense of imagination. Once the children begin to read they follow the school reading scheme which includes books from Oxford Reading Tree, Jelly and Bean and Collins Big Cats. Children have regular 1:1 support from staff as well as guided reading sessions.



**Mathematics** - this area of learning includes counting, matching, sorting, seeking patterns, making connections and recognising relationships through working with numbers, shape, space and measures. Their mathematical understanding is developed through stories, songs, games and imaginative play. Our outdoor environment is used to develop numeracy skills, explore mathematical concepts and to solve practical problems. Our large mobile water tray, sand pit and painting easel are resources used by the children to experiment with shape, space and measure, and we have a wide range of resources for sorting, grouping and sharing activities. Wherever possible, the whole school environment is used as an enhancement to aid learning.



**Understanding the World** - in this area of learning, children are developing the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. Activities based on first hand experiences encourage exploration, experimentation, observation, problem solving, prediction and discussion. The children find out about information and communication technology, make use of the school buildings and grounds to enhance learning, and have numerous educational trips throughout the school year.

At this early age the foundations of the Spanish language are introduced by a language specialist supported by the class teacher. Multi-sensory teaching methods are used.





## Expressive Arts and Design

This area of learning provides the opportunity to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through music, movement, dance, imaginative and role play activities, design and technology. Children are provided with a stimulating environment in which creativity, originality and expressiveness are valued through lessons delivered by the class teacher and visiting specialists.



Children take part in drama workshops and productions, assemblies and informal music concerts.

## What can I expect my child to be doing at school?

Your child will be supported in their learning and development through play. It is important to us that your child has fun at school and develops a love of learning at this early stage. Your child will be involved in:

- Making friends and learning how to play together;
- Singing, dancing and creating;
- Stories and role play;
- Learning to be independent;
- Talking about all the things they do and think;
- Choosing their own activities;
- Learning both indoors and outdoors;
- Playing with adults;
- Making a mess and helping to tidy up.



## Assessment and Reporting

All children within the E.Y.F.S. are continually assessed, with sensitive observations which are recorded in a Learning Journey file. The seven areas of learning provide the focus for these assessments. Parents are encouraged to participate in formulating these profiles. The completed Learning Journey is sent home at the end of the Reception year. Parents can ask to access their child's developmental records at any time.

Completion of the E.Y.F.S. profile assessment is a statutory requirement at the end of the Foundation Stage.

An Interim Report is sent home at the end of the Michaelmas and Lent Terms from your child's Class Teacher and the Head of the Junior Department. A detailed report outlining progress in every area is issued at the end of the year. There are two formal parent/teacher consultation evenings per year. A final consultation is offered with the class teacher at the end of the Reception year to discuss each child's E.Y.F.S. Profile.

Normally, a class meeting is held each September to outline class routines and expectations. If there are restrictions in place, this information will be sent to you in the form of a video PowerPoint instead, after the first couple of weeks of the new academic year.

## More about the Learning Journey

A Learning Journey is a special file which celebrates your child's progress and achievements. This record will reflect the interests and personality of your child and will contain observations, photographs and milestones.

Your input into the Learning Journey is very important to us and we value contributions from home at any time; you may add your own comments, photographs and certificates throughout the year. The files are ordinarily sent home at the end of each full term.



## Weekly Diary

Your child will be given a weekly diary which will give a personalised overview of their week's learning along with next steps to help progress and suggestions as to how to support your child at home.

We would be very grateful if you could record any progress witnessed at home such as new words used and new interests. It is also helpful if from time to time you can write about out of school events e.g. trips to the park, visiting relatives and going to the zoo, all of which help to stimulate discussion within the classroom.

## Parental Involvement

The Early Years Foundation Stage states:

*"Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential."*

*(E.Y.F.S. Statutory Framework, December 2023)*

At Longridge Towers we value our close partnership with parents. The three way link between home, school and the child is crucial to the child achieving their maximum potential. By working together we can ensure a happy, successful primary school career. We value the support of parents and offer a range of activities and social activities to strengthen our partnership.

We offer a welcoming environment where:

- Parents are greeted by staff;
- Parents and staff regularly exchange information about their child;
- Photographs of the children and their activities are displayed;
- Children's work is displayed and parents are encouraged to recognise the relevance of it;
- 'Stay and Play' sessions are offered for parents to attend.



## Communication

We use lots of different ways to communicate with parents to help you find out about things which are happening at school, such as work the children have been doing, their achievements, special events, celebrations, dates for your diary and general information about the day to day life of the school.

Communication is vital in the setting and we:

- Encourage parents to review their child's learning through looking at their Learning Journey;
- Have regular informal discussions with parents about their child's interests and to offer advice about ways to support their development and extend their learning at home;
- Have formal planned meetings to discuss progress;
- Keep an up to date Parents' notice board;
- Provide a diary for the regular exchange of information between all carers of the child.

An E.Y.F.S. newsletter is issued at the start of each half term; this outlines key dates for the children in Early Years for the term ahead. Parents are usually invited to events by individual e-mail or letter. A whole school weekly newsletter is sent to parents each Friday via e-mail giving further information. The newsletter also outlines school-wide events for the week ahead. Parents are encouraged to check the school website regularly for news and information - [www.lts.org.uk](http://www.lts.org.uk).

Everyday routine issues should be discussed with Sandra or Kate; any more serious issues should be directed to Mrs Sarah Maddock.



## Digital Media



The E.Y.F.S. department regularly uses an iPad to take photographs which show the development and progress of the children within the setting. These images are used in the children's personal files and occasionally displayed on the walls within the classroom.

In addition, the school likes to celebrate the success of its pupils by displaying photographs within the weekly school newsletter and by occasionally submitting articles to the press illustrated by accompanying photographs. Photographs may also be used on the school's web page, Facebook / Twitter pages (for further information see our 'Taking, Storing and Using Images of Children Policy' which is sent out to parents of new children). On joining Longridge Towers, parents will be asked to sign a 'Permission to Take Photographs' form.

The use of mobile phones to take photographs within the setting is not permitted. The use of personal mobile devices, including any electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities, is not permitted in the setting at any time. Please see our Use of Electronic Devices and Digital Photography Policy for more information.

## Clothing

Children in the Early Years Department are not required to wear a uniform, however there is a school sweatshirt, jogging trousers and T-shirt available to purchase from school should parents so wish. Children will also require a change of underwear, wellies and outdoor waterproof clothing. Each week, the children will have a 'woodland morning or afternoon' and will need appropriate waterproof clothing including trousers. Overalls are provided for messy activities. Shoes without laces are advised and a pair of trainers (with velcro fastenings) are needed when the children have P.E. swimming kits should be brought to school in a small backpack without any drawstrings. It is vitally

important that ALL items of clothing including shoes and socks are clearly labelled with your child's name.

## **Food and Drink**

Each morning children in the Early Years make their choice for school lunch from a selection of homemade hot meals. All meals are cooked on site and where possible, locally sourced fresh produce is used. Alternatively parents may prefer their child to have a packed lunch from home. Lunch is normally served at 12 noon. Milk is provided free of charge for any children who would like it and children may also bring a healthy snack and a bottle of water. Chocolate, sweets and fizzy/sugary drinks are discouraged. Water is available throughout the day and fruit and biscuits are provided for all children staying for after school activities. Please inform the school of any special dietary requirements. Please note that if you are sending grapes into school, they must be halved lengthways as they are a choking hazard to younger children.

## **Daily Routines**

Normally, children in the Jerningham building arrive at school between 8.30am and 8.45am when the school day begins. Parents may park in the allocated spaces in front of the building; please note the one-way system in operation and observe the 10mph speed limit within the school grounds.

The children have a playtime break each morning and afternoon and time to play outside after lunch.

The school day for children in the Early Years is flexible for children up to the age of five years (see section on funding). At the end of each day there are structured play and enrichment activities until 4.45pm (these activities are generally offered to the younger children in Early Years after the Michaelmas half term holiday to allow children to settle into school life and adjust to the school day). This should be arranged in consultation with Sandra. Details of these activities are sent out at the beginning of each term.

Parents are asked to complete a form specifying each child's collection arrangements. In the event of someone other than the named person collecting a child, written notification must be provided in advance. All pupils in the E.Y.F.S. should be collected from the Jerningham Building. If a parent fails to collect their child by the end of school, the children will be supervised in the Stobo Building until contact has been made. Parents must ensure that telephone numbers are kept up to date and notify the class teacher and the school office of any changes.

In the interests of safeguarding our pupils, access to school buildings is via a coded entry system. All parents and visitors must ring the bell to gain access to the Junior buildings. Pupils are not permitted to open doors to visitors. Please be aware that we have these systems in place to ensure your child's safety and would appreciate your co-operation at all times in these matters.

There are occasions each year when pupils are taken on outings and trips for educational and recreational reasons. Before any pupil may participate in such activities a 'Permission to Travel' form must be held by the school. It is the school's practice to ask parents to sign a new form each year. In addition, parents of children in E.Y.F.S. will be asked to complete a consent form for each trip undertaken.



## Sickness



In the event of your child being absent, please email Mrs Bullen or Mrs Allis in the Junior Department office ([aallis@lts.org.uk](mailto:aallis@lts.org.uk)) or phone the school office before 9.00am. It is vital that children remain at home if they are unwell. To prevent the spread of infection, please keep your son/daughter at home for 48 hours after an infectious illness especially after diarrhea or vomiting.

The school retains the right to refuse admission, or to send a child home, if we believe they are not well enough to be in school. This policy is strictly enforced to maintain the best interest of all children and staff.

## **Procedure for Administering Medicines**

At the beginning of every school year parents are asked to complete and sign a Health Questionnaire which covers all medical requirements. This form is then kept by the School Matron.

All parents will be asked to complete a consent form if they wish their child to be given medicine whilst at school. A consent form is available from Sandra and on the school website. Any accidents or injuries that may occur at school are recorded and parents are informed and asked to sign the record at the end of the school day. At all times there is a qualified paediatric first aider on the premises when children are present.



## **Inclusion**

It is our aim to support each child to make progress at their own pace and to provide support so that each child can fulfill their potential.

The school is able to offer some support to pupils who have recognised Special Educational Needs. We believe that early identification of Special Educational Needs is very important, with appropriate challenges for Gifted and Talented children. A copy of the whole school Inclusion Policy incorporating Special Educational Needs and Disability is available on the school website; a copy of the E.Y.F.S. Inclusion policy is also available on the website.



## Complaints Procedure

Longridge Towers School prides itself in the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided for its pupils. If parents wish to make a formal complaint they should do so in accordance with the School's Complaints procedure, a copy of which is available on request from the school office. Parents may also contact Ofsted ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)) or the Independent School Inspectorate ([www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)) if they wish to make a complaint.



## Funding

From the age of three a child may attend the school setting on a full or part-time basis. These sessions are determined by a child's date of birth. By the time children enter the Reception year there is an expectation that they will attend on a full-time basis.

Part-time morning sessions are from 8.45am to 11.45am, or 1.00pm to include lunch. For children attending full time, the afternoon ends at 3.15pm unless pupils stay for enrichment (see above).

Government Funding for Nursery and Reception may be claimed for up to thirty hours per week depending upon where you live and personal circumstances. Funding commences in the term after the child has turned 3 years old and lasts until the end of the term following their fifth birthday. Please contact school for further details.

New pupils can be admitted into the E.Y.F.S. setting on the first day of each half term after their third birthday. Children who join the setting midway through the year will still be offered the Government Funding.

## Policies

There are a number of policies which are specific to the E.Y.F.S. and these are available for you to read and provide further detailed information about practices and procedures at Longridge Towers. These policies (along with all school policies) are available on the school website or from the school office.

Parents are very welcome to contact Sandra Bullen or the Head of Junior Department, Sarah Maddock, if they require further clarification on any issues relating to the E.Y.F.S.

S. J. Maddock

S. Bullen

April 2024

