



Where Little Lambs Learn and Play

Policies and Procedures

PP05 – Curriculum & Child Development Policy

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This document is reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in law, statutory guidance, or operational needs. Any changes, amendments, alterations, or updates of this document will be reviewed and/or approved by the Nursery Manager and a company Director.

All members of staff will be required to read this document in its entirety within 2 weeks of publication and for new starters before working with children, with confirmation that it has been understood.

Inevitably, there will be some situations that arise which are not specifically covered within this document. In such situation, if practicable, the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager should be consulted for further guidance or instruction.

Any queries arising from this document should be raised with the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager in the first instance.

This document and its policies and procedures herein, are not intended to replace recognised, established industry or regulatory safety standards, principles, or protocols.

Suggestions for future changes, amendments, alterations, additions, or updates should be sent to the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager.

Copies of this document are uncontrolled and may not be current. If in doubt, please consult the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager.

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1. Curriculum Statement & EYFS 2025 Compliance

Little Lambs Nursery delivers a rich, responsive, and child-centred curriculum that reflects the values and principles of the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025) while embracing the unique opportunities provided by our farm-based environment. Our curriculum is designed to promote holistic development across all areas of learning, ensuring that every child becomes confident, curious, independent, resilient, and deeply connected to the natural world.

We recognise that high-quality early education begins with children's interests, builds upon their experiences, and is enriched by meaningful interactions with skilled practitioners who understand how young children learn. Through a combination of child-led exploration, thoughtful adult guidance, and carefully designed environments both indoors and outdoors, our curriculum supports secure attachments, emotional wellbeing, sustained thinking, and a lifelong love of learning.

1.1 Curriculum Intent

Our intent is to provide an immersive, nature-rich curriculum where children learn through first-hand experiences, play, exploration, and meaningful relationships. We value childhood as a unique stage of life and aim to nurture children who are confident in themselves, inquisitive about their world, able to communicate effectively, and capable of forming warm, trusting relationships with others. The natural environment is at the heart of our curriculum. Opportunities to connect with animals, observe seasonal changes, explore farmland, and participate in forest school sessions foster respect for nature and deepen children's understanding of sustainability. Our curriculum reflects our belief that independence, resilience, creativity, and curiosity grow best through real experiences, supported by responsive adults who recognise the value of open-ended learning.

1.2 Curriculum Implementation

The curriculum is implemented through a balance of child-led play, adult-guided learning, provocations, continuous provision, and consistent daily routines. Practitioners observe children closely, identifying their interests and developmental needs, and use this knowledge to shape the learning environment and offer experiences that extend thinking and promote problem-solving.

Outdoor learning is a central component of our daily practice. Children access outdoor spaces in all safe weather conditions, exploring natural materials, engaging with the rhythms of farm life, and developing physical confidence through challenging but manageable risk.

Familiar routines create security and support children's sense of belonging, while practitioners skilfully weave learning opportunities into everyday moments such as mealtimes, farm walks, transitions, care routines, and interactions with animals. This blend of freedom, structure, and professional judgement ensures that every child receives an enriching and developmentally appropriate experience.

1.3 Curriculum Impact

We know our curriculum is effective when children demonstrate curiosity, sustained engagement, strong relationships, and observable progress across all areas of learning. Assessment is woven naturally into practice and supports practitioners in understanding each child's development.

Progress is monitored through ongoing observations, professional judgement, and the use of the Family platform. Summative assessments are completed termly and shared with families, alongside the statutory progress check at age two. We do not use formal levels or unnecessary paperwork; instead, our evidence of learning is grounded in deeper understanding of the child, their interests, and their developmental trajectory.

The impact of our curriculum is seen in confident children who explore purposefully, communicate effectively, regulate their emotions with support, and demonstrate the skills and dispositions necessary for the next stage of their education.

1.4 Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin our entire curriculum. Children are encouraged to play and explore, engage in active learning, and think creatively and critically. Our environments offer open-ended materials, natural resources, and hands-on opportunities that promote deep involvement. Practitioners model curiosity, resilience, and flexible thinking, supporting children to develop perseverance, problem-solving abilities, and sustained concentration. Children have time, space, and freedom to revisit ideas, test theories, and engage in shared thinking with adults who scaffold learning sensitively and purposefully.

1.5 Cultural Capital

Little Lambs Nursery enhances cultural capital by providing children with experiences that broaden their understanding of the world beyond their immediate home environment. Farm-based learning provides unique opportunities to learn about food production, animal care, weather, seasons, and sustainable living. Children engage in gardening, observe livestock, explore natural habitats, and experience the changing landscape across the year.

Storytelling, music, art, celebrations, language-rich interactions, and exposure to a diverse range of experiences ensure that each child builds the knowledge, confidence, and skills needed to thrive in modern society. Families are welcomed as partners, contributing to the cultural richness of the setting through shared experiences, traditions, and community connections.

1.6 Curriculum in a Farm-Based Environment

Our curriculum is deeply enriched by its location within a working farm. Children benefit from daily engagement with nature, access to outdoor learning, and unique sensory experiences not found in typical early years settings. Forest school sessions deepen children's connection to the natural world and support emotional wellbeing through exploration, risk-taking, creativity, and resilience. Familiarity with animals, farm structures, and natural cycles provides meaningful embedding of science, language, mathematics, and physical development through real-life contexts.

Safety remains paramount; children access only those farm areas deemed safe and appropriate, under the guidance of trained staff and in accordance with the nursery's risk assessments and access control procedures.

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The Curriculum Statement sets out our commitment to delivering a meaningful, inclusive, and developmentally rich early education shaped by the EYFS 2025 and inspired by the unique opportunities of our farm environment. Through thoughtful implementation and continuous reflection, Little Lambs Nursery provides a curriculum that nurtures confident, capable, and curious learners who are well prepared for future learning and deeply connected to the natural world.

2. Key Person & Settling-In Policy

Little Lambs Nursery recognises the central importance of secure relationships in early childhood. The key person approach is the foundation of our practice and underpins children's emotional wellbeing, identity, and readiness to explore the world with confidence. Through consistent, responsive relationships, children develop a sense of security that enables them to play, learn, take risks, and build meaningful connections with others.

This policy outlines how the key person system is implemented across the nursery, how we work with families to ensure smooth transitions, and how settling-in procedures support children to feel safe, valued, and understood. Our approach reflects the EYFS 2025 requirement for strong attachments and emphasises the importance of partnership between families and practitioners.

2.1 The Role of the Key Person

Each child is allocated a designated key person who takes primary responsibility for their emotional wellbeing, daily care, developmental progress, and ongoing communication with parents. The key person forms a secure, trusting relationship with the child, offering the familiarity, comfort, and predictability that children need as they adjust to life at nursery. They observe the child closely, understand their individual routines and temperament, and ensure that their unique needs are met consistently throughout the day. The key person also plays a crucial role in planning and assessing learning, ensuring that activities and experiences reflect the child's interests, developmental stage, and emerging skills.

2.2 Attachment and Emotional Security

Our key person approach is rooted in attachment theory and reflects the understanding that warm, responsive relationships support children's developing sense of security. Practitioners provide consistent reassurance, comfort, and co-regulation, helping children manage emotions and navigate new experiences. The nursery environment is designed to feel welcoming and predictable, enabling children to form relationships not only

with their key person but also with a small number of familiar staff. This balance ensures security while promoting social confidence and flexibility.

2.3 Settling-In Procedures

Settling-in is a personalised process tailored to each child's emotional needs, prior experience, and family circumstances. Every child is offered two settling-in sessions before joining the nursery fully. These sessions give children the opportunity to explore their new environment gradually, meet their key person, and begin establishing trust. Parents are welcomed to stay during these sessions if they wish, or may choose to step away for short periods once the child shows signs of readiness. The pace of settling-in is flexible, and the key person works closely with families to ensure that transitions into the nursery feel calm, reassuring, and supportive.

Communication is central to this process; parents are encouraged to share information about their child's routines, preferences, and comfort items to support a smooth start.

2.4 Partnership with Parents and Carers

Strong relationships with families are integral to the success of the key person approach. Practitioners share daily feedback through face-to-face conversations and/or the Family platform, keeping parents informed about their child's experiences, achievements, and wellbeing. The key person and parent work collaboratively to support the child's development, sharing insights, discussing progress, and identifying any areas where additional support may be needed.

Parents are encouraged to contribute to observations, provide information about interests emerging at home, and participate in discussions about next steps in learning. This shared understanding strengthens the continuity between home and nursery, ensuring that children feel secure, supported, and understood.

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The Key Person & Settling-In Policy ensures that all children entering Little Lambs Nursery experience a nurturing beginning to their early education. By prioritising secure attachments, maintaining strong family partnerships, and offering a sensitive, flexible settling-in period, we create a foundation of emotional security that supports children's wellbeing and enables them to engage fully with the rich learning experiences offered throughout the nursery environment.

3. The Learning Environment (Indoor & Outdoor)

The learning environment at Little Lambs Nursery is fundamental to how children grow, explore, and make sense of the world. We understand the environment to be more than a backdrop to learning; it is an active, responsive, and dynamic component of our curriculum.

Our spaces are designed to promote curiosity, independence, sustained engagement, and meaningful interactions between children, adults, nature, and materials. The environment reflects our ethos of calmness, outdoor-first exploration, and deep respect for childhood. Both indoors and outdoors, we offer thoughtfully organised areas that enable children to investigate, question, imagine, collaborate, and challenge themselves safely. The natural farm setting enriches the learning experience, giving children unique opportunities to develop emotional resilience, physical confidence, and an appreciation for the natural world.

3.1 Principles of Continuous Provision

Continuous provision forms the foundation of our learning environment. Resources are available throughout the day to allow children to revisit ideas, build on previous experiences, and follow their interests with autonomy. The layout of resources encourages independence, with materials stored accessibly so that children can select and return items without unnecessary adult intervention.

Practitioners enhance continuous provision subtly and purposefully, offering provocations and open-ended invitations to explore, rather than directing children's play. This creates a learning atmosphere where curiosity thrives and where children feel confident to experiment and develop their own ideas.

3.2 The Indoor Environment

The indoor environment is designed to feel calm, welcoming, and homely, with natural materials, warm tones, and carefully chosen splashes of colour. Each area within the rooms is purposeful and contributes to children's holistic development. Specialist dedicated spaces for things such as construction, small-world play, role play, creativity, books, sensory exploration, and early mathematics are arranged to promote flow, collaboration, and deep engagement.

Soft furnishings, cozy corners, and quiet spaces allow children to rest, regulate their emotions, and develop a sense of safety and belonging.

Resources are open-ended wherever possible, encouraging imagination, problem-solving, and sustained focus. The free-flow nature of the rooms supports children's independence, allowing them to navigate the environment confidently and choose activities that align with their interests.

3.3 The Outdoor Environment

Outdoor learning is at the heart of our curriculum. Children access outdoor spaces daily and in all safe weather conditions, developing resilience, strength, coordination, and a deep connection with the natural world. Our secure garden area offers opportunities for physical challenge, imaginative play, exploration of natural materials, and hands-on learning about the changing seasons. The outdoor environment provides rich sensory experiences - wind, mud, grass, rain, birdsong (and the occasional cow moo!) - that cannot be replicated indoors and that form an integral part of children's early development.

Children engage in climbing, digging, balancing, building with natural materials, transporting objects, and investigating the world around them. Staff support children to explore confidently while maintaining appropriate supervision and ensuring that risks are managed sensitively and responsibly.

3.4 Forest School and Farm-Based Learning

Our setting within a working farm offers children unique learning opportunities beyond the nursery garden. Forest school sessions and supervised farm walks deepen children's understanding of nature, environmental change, and food production. Through carefully planned and risk-assessed experiences, children may observe animals, explore woodland areas, plant and care for produce, learn about sustainable living, and participate in seasonal activities that reflect life on the farm. These experiences build cultural capital, broaden children's understanding of the world, and support personal growth through manageable risk, resilience-building tasks, and open-ended exploration.

All access to farm areas is guided by trained practitioners and follows strict safety procedures in line with PP04.

3.5 A Risk–Benefit Approach to Learning

Learning within both indoor and outdoor environments includes opportunities for children to manage safe levels of risk appropriate to their age and ability. We embrace a risk–benefit approach, recognising that activities such as climbing uneven surfaces, exploring natural textures, handling tools under supervision, and experiencing variable weather contribute to children's physical competence, problem-solving skills, and confidence. Practitioners support children to understand boundaries, practise safety, and make informed decisions, while ensuring that risks remain proportionate and controlled. This approach reflects our belief that meaningful learning happens when children are trusted, supported, and allowed to test their abilities within a safe framework.

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The Learning Environment Policy ensures that children at Little Lambs Nursery experience a rich, purposeful, and thoughtfully designed environment that supports their holistic development. Through continuous provision, well-organised indoor spaces, immersive outdoor learning, forest school opportunities, and the unique enrichment of our farm setting, we provide an environment that inspires curiosity, creativity, independence, and joy in learning.

Our approach ensures that every child is supported to explore, take risks, and thrive within spaces that are safe, nurturing, and deeply responsive to their developmental needs.

4. Curriculum for Under-Twos

The first two years of life represent a period of extraordinary growth, sensitivity, and foundational development. At Little Lambs Nursery, we recognise that babies and young toddlers learn differently from older children and require a curriculum that is deeply rooted in close relationships, responsive care, sensory exploration, and predictable routines.

Our under-twos provision is designed to nurture emotional security, support early communication, build physical competence, and create the foundations for lifelong wellbeing and learning. This section outlines how our curriculum meets the unique developmental needs of our youngest children, ensuring that their earliest experiences in the nursery are warm, meaningful, and attuned to the way babies grow and learn.

4.1 Attachment-Led Care and Emotional Security

Attachment-led practice sits at the heart of our under-twos curriculum. Babies learn through relationships, and their sense of safety is shaped by the presence of familiar, responsive adults who understand their cues and respond with sensitivity.

Each baby has a designated key person within the under-twos room, supporting emotional regulation, secure attachments, and consistent interactions throughout the day. Practitioners provide comfort, nurturing touch, eye contact, and warm communication, creating an emotionally rich environment in which babies feel seen, soothed, and valued. This secure relational foundation enables babies to explore confidently and engage meaningfully with their surroundings.

4.2 Routines as the Foundation of Learning

For babies and toddlers, care routines are a core part of the curriculum. Nappy changing, feeding, sleeping, and mealtimes are approached as rich learning experiences, offering moments for connection, conversation, exploration, and emotional support. Practitioners slow down during routines, allowing babies time to process, communicate, and respond. Consistent routines provide predictability and a sense of control, helping children understand the rhythm of the day and build trust in the environment. Babies are supported to develop early independence, such as feeding themselves, recognising familiar objects, and making simple choices, all of which foster a growing sense of autonomy.

4.3 Sensory-Rich Exploration

The under-twos curriculum emphasises sensory learning as babies make sense of the world through touch, sound, sight, movement, and taste. The environment is carefully prepared with natural materials, soft textures, open-ended objects, treasure baskets, heuristic play resources, and opportunities for early problem-solving. Babies experience light, shadow, water, natural objects, and materials that invite exploration.

Practitioners support this sensory journey through calm modelling, shared attention, and gentle conversation, helping babies develop early cognitive skills, sustained interest, and emerging communication. Sensory exploration is never rushed; children are given time and freedom to repeat actions, test ideas, and explore materials in their own way.

4.4 Communication, Language, and Early Interaction

Communication begins long before spoken language, and practitioners are skilled in understanding and responding to babies' gestures, vocalisations, eye gaze, and body language. Early interactions include singing, storytelling, responding to babble, naming objects, and modelling language in warm, natural ways.

The indoor and outdoor environments are language-rich, with staff narrating experiences, acknowledging emotions, and introducing vocabulary through daily routines.

Babies are encouraged to engage in early turn-taking, shared attention, and imitation, forming the building blocks of expressive and receptive language. For children learning English as an additional language, staff support early communication sensitively and ensure that English is always modelled clearly as the main language of the setting.

4.5 Physical Development and Free Movement

Babies and toddlers develop physical skills rapidly, and our curriculum prioritises movement as a vital component of learning. The under-twos room is designed to enable free movement, safe exploration, and natural progression through key developmental milestones such as rolling, sitting, crawling, cruising, and walking. Practitioners encourage movement through soft play resources, low-level furniture, climb-and-reach

opportunities, and varied floor-based experiences. Babies access outdoor environments daily when safe to do so, supporting balance, spatial awareness, core strength, and sensory resilience.

While some supportive equipment may be used when appropriate, the emphasis remains on natural, unrestricted movement that encourages children to develop confidence and physical awareness in their own time.



Our Curriculum for Under-Twos ensures that babies and young toddlers at Little Lambs Nursery are supported through warm, responsive relationships, thoughtfully structured routines, and rich sensory and physical experiences. By embracing attachment-led practice, prioritising emotional security, and offering environments that encourage exploration and independence, we create a foundation for curiosity, communication, resilience, and joy in learning.

This sensitive, developmentally informed approach reflects the EYFS 2025 principles and ensures that our youngest children thrive within a nurturing, nature-connected early years environment.

5. Observation, Assessment & Planning (OAP)

Observation, assessment, and planning are integral components of the curriculum at Little Lambs Nursery. They ensure that every child receives personalised learning experiences that reflect their developmental needs, interests, and emerging abilities.

Our approach is grounded in the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025), which emphasises the importance of understanding each child as a unique learner and using professional judgement to support their progress without unnecessary paperwork or data-driven targets. At Little Lambs, assessment is meaningful, purposeful, and deeply embedded in everyday interactions, enabling practitioners to build a holistic picture of each child's learning journey.

5.1 Observational Practice

Observation lies at the heart of our assessment approach. Practitioners observe children naturally as they play, interact, explore, and engage with the environment, forming an understanding of what children know, how they communicate, what interests them, and the learning behaviours they demonstrate. Observations are not limited to formal moments; they are woven into daily routines, farm walks, outdoor exploration, mealtimes, and continuous provision. These insights allow practitioners to identify strengths, emerging skills, and areas where children may benefit from further support or challenge.

Observations are recorded sensitively - prioritising quality over quantity - and reflected in the interactions and opportunities offered to the child each day.

5.2 In-the-Moment Planning

In-the-moment planning is central to how learning is supported at Little Lambs Nursery. Practitioners respond to children's ideas, questions, and discoveries as they arise, offering timely support, modelling language, extending thinking, and introducing materials that deepen exploration. This responsive approach respects children's natural curiosity and ensures that learning is relevant, meaningful, and rich with possibility. Rather than planning rigid activities in advance, staff skilfully adapt the environment and their teaching to meet children where they are, supporting new concepts through practical, hands-on experiences, especially those connected to nature and the farm setting.

5.3 Summative Assessment and Professional Judgement

Summative assessments take place termly and are guided by professional judgement, knowledge of child development, and the principles of the EYFS 2025. These assessments provide an overview of each child's progress across the prime and specific areas of learning, identifying how they are developing relative to typical expectations and what support may be needed to help them flourish.

The nursery does not use unnecessary levels, tick-box tracking systems, or excessive form-filling. Instead, summative assessments focus on whether a child is developing as expected, may require additional support, or is showing signs of advanced skill in particular areas. This balanced approach ensures clarity without imposing pressure on children or families.

5.4 Progress Check at Age Two

In accordance with statutory requirements, the nursery completes a comprehensive progress check for every child between the ages of twenty-four and thirty-six months. This assessment focuses on the three prime areas - communication and language, physical development, and personal, social and emotional development. Practitioners work closely with parents to ensure that the progress check reflects the child's experiences at home as well as in the nursery. Where the check identifies areas in which a child may need additional support, early interventions are discussed and planned collaboratively, with involvement from external professionals where appropriate.

5.5 Working in Partnership with Parents

Parents are vital partners in the observation and assessment process. Practitioners share observations, photographs, and updates through the Family platform, providing families with meaningful insight into their child's daily experiences and emerging learning. Parents are encouraged to share their own observations from home, including new skills, interests, or developmental milestones.

Regular discussions with families build a deeper understanding of the child and ensure that assessment reflects the whole picture of their development. Termly reports, informal conversations, and dedicated meetings provide opportunities to celebrate progress, reflect on next steps, and agree on how to support learning both at home and at nursery.

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The Observation, Assessment & Planning Policy ensures that every child at Little Lambs Nursery receives learning experiences that are attuned to their individual needs and enriched by the unique opportunities of our farm-based environment. Through responsive observation, thoughtful assessment, and collaborative planning, practitioners create a curriculum that is dynamic, meaningful, and deeply respectful of children's natural ways of learning. This approach ensures that progress is understood holistically, communicated clearly, and used to guide the next steps in each child's learning journey.

6. Supporting Children with SEND

Little Lambs Nursery is committed to providing an inclusive, nurturing, and accessible environment where every child can thrive. We recognise that children develop at different rates, and that some may require additional support or specialist intervention to meet their full potential.

Our approach reflects the ethos of early identification, partnership with families, and personalised provision, ensuring that children with special educational needs and disabilities receive timely, appropriate, and compassionate support. This policy outlines how we identify, assess, and support children with SEND in alignment with the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025), the SEND Code of Practice, and relevant equality legislation.

6.1 Early Identification and Graduated Approach

Early identification is at the heart of effective SEND support. Practitioners observe children daily, noting the ways they communicate, play, interact, and respond to their environment. Concerns may emerge through careful observation, developmental checkpoints, or conversations with parents who are often the first to notice changes or challenges. When a concern is identified, the child's key person and the SENCO work collaboratively to assess needs and determine the most appropriate next steps.

We follow the graduated approach of assess, plan, do, review, ensuring that support is responsive, targeted, and regularly evaluated. Strategies are adapted over time to reflect children's progress, emerging needs, or changes in circumstances. No child is ever labelled or stigmatised; instead, the focus remains on understanding the child as an individual and providing the right help at the right time.

6.2 Role of the SENCO

The nursery's SENCO is responsible for coordinating SEND support, overseeing the graduated approach, liaising with external professionals, and ensuring that the needs of children receiving additional support are met consistently. While the Nursery Manager fulfils this role initially, a dedicated trained SENCO will be appointed as the setting grows.

The SENCO provides advice and guidance to practitioners, ensures that staff understand their responsibilities, and supports the development of effective strategies to help children progress. The SENCO also works collaboratively with families, ensuring that their insights, concerns, and aspirations are central to the support process.

6.3 Individual Support Plans and Targeted Strategies

Where a child requires more targeted support, an Individual Support Plan (ISP) is created in partnership with the child's family. The plan outlines the child's strengths, areas of need, agreed outcomes, and the strategies or interventions being implemented to support progress. ISPs are living documents, reviewed regularly through discussions with families, staff, and any external professionals involved. Strategies may include adaptations to the environment, additional adult support, communication tools, sensory resources, or tailored learning experiences.

All support is child-centred, respectful, and focused on enabling participation, independence, and confidence.

6.4 Working with External Professionals

Some children may benefit from the expertise of external specialists, including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, health visitors, paediatricians, or the local authority SEND team. With parental consent, the SENCO liaises with relevant professionals, shares assessments where appropriate, and incorporates recommendations into the child's support plan. Multi-agency working ensures that interventions are coordinated, consistent, and informed by specialist knowledge.

The nursery welcomes professional visits and engages openly in collaborative decision-making to ensure that every child receives comprehensive support.

6.5 Reasonable Adjustments and Inclusive Practice

Little Lambs Nursery is committed to making reasonable adjustments to ensure equal access for all children. Adjustments may relate to the physical environment, resources, communication approaches, routines, or staffing arrangements. Inclusion means more than simply providing access; it means ensuring that every child feels valued, respected, and able to participate meaningfully in the life of the nursery. Adaptations are made sensitively and unobtrusively, ensuring that support enhances children's independence rather than limiting it.

6.6 Partnership with Parents and Families

Parents are essential partners in supporting children with SEND. We recognise their unique insights and work closely with them to understand their child's needs, strengths, and lived experiences. Practitioners maintain open, honest, and regular communication, ensuring that families feel informed, respected, and fully involved in decision-making. Parents are encouraged to contribute to ISPs, share observations from home, and participate in review meetings. Together, we build a shared understanding of the child and create a cohesive, supportive network around them.

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The Supporting Children with SEND Policy ensures that Little Lambs Nursery offers high-quality, compassionate, and tailored support for children with additional needs. Through early identification, thoughtful planning, skilled intervention, and strong partnerships with families and professionals, we create an inclusive environment where every child is empowered to thrive within the rich and nurturing context of our farm-based setting.

7. Behaviour & Self-Regulation Policy

Little Lambs Nursery promotes a warm, respectful, and emotionally attuned approach to supporting children's behaviour. We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and reflects each child's developmental stage, lived experiences, and emotional needs.

Our approach supports self-regulation, empathy, problem-solving, and resilience, enabling children to learn how to express themselves confidently and manage their feelings with the support of trusted adults. This policy outlines how we guide behaviour through positive relationships, co-regulation, consistent expectations, and a deep understanding of

child development. It aligns with the EYFS 2025 emphasis on emotional wellbeing, executive function, and nurturing interactions that enable children to thrive.

7.1 Behaviour Philosophy

Our behaviour philosophy is grounded in the belief that children learn best when they feel safe, understood, and valued. Behaviour challenges are approached with curiosity rather than judgement, recognising that children are still developing the skills needed to communicate, cooperate, and regulate their emotions.

Practitioners model kindness, respect, and empathy, setting the tone for how children interact with peers, adults, and the natural environment. Boundaries are clear, predictable, and explained in developmentally appropriate ways, ensuring that children understand expectations while still feeling supported and capable.

7.2 Co-Regulation and Emotion Coaching

Co-regulation is central to how we support children's emotional development. Practitioners stay close, calm, and responsive, helping children identify and manage their feelings through gentle guidance, soothing language, and consistent presence. Emotion coaching helps children understand what they are feeling, why they may be feeling it, and what they can do to feel more settled. Staff label emotions, validate children's experiences, and teach simple strategies such as deep breathing, asking for help, or seeking comfort. This reflective, supportive approach helps children develop resilience, self-awareness, and the foundations for long-term emotional wellbeing.

7.3 Promoting Self-Regulation Skills

Self-regulation skills develop gradually and emerge through repeated interactions with caring adults. Practitioners support children to recognise their emotional states, understand cause and effect, resolve conflict, and negotiate social situations.

Calm spaces are available for children who need time to settle or rest, and staff help children learn when and how to use these areas appropriately.

Opportunities for physical activity, outdoor play, connecting with animals, and sensory experiences all contribute to children's emotional regulation and wellbeing. Staff remain attentive to signs of dysregulation and adapt routines, transitions, or demands to support children's emotional needs.

7.4 Guiding Positive Behaviour

Positive behaviour is encouraged through modelling, praise, gentle redirection, and clear communication. Practitioners focus on what children can do, rather than what they should not do, and provide children with the language and tools needed to resolve conflict and make positive choices. When behaviour becomes challenging, staff use strategies such as offering choices, explaining consequences in simple terms, breaking tasks down, or providing a calming sensory activity.

Physical or exclusionary punishments, including "time out," are not used, as they are inconsistent with the EYFS principles of emotional security and relationship-based support.

7.5 Partnership with Families

Families are partners in promoting positive behaviour and self-regulation. Staff communicate openly with parents about behavioural developments, emerging patterns, or challenges observed within the nursery. Together, parents and practitioners work to understand triggers, share strategies, and create consistent approaches between home and nursery. Where a child needs additional support, families are involved in discussions and plans to ensure that interventions are constructive, sensitive, and aligned with the child's needs.

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The Behaviour & Self-Regulation Policy ensures that children at Little Lambs Nursery are supported with compassion, consistency, and respect. Through co-regulation, emotional coaching, and developmentally informed guidance, practitioners help children build the social and emotional foundations needed for lifelong wellbeing. This positive, relationship-based approach reflects the nursery's ethos and ensures that every child feels secure, valued, and capable of navigating their world with confidence.

8. Positive Handling & Physical Intervention

Little Lambs Nursery is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment where children's wellbeing is protected and their emotional needs are supported with sensitivity and care. Positive handling refers to the physical support offered to a child only when necessary to keep them safe from immediate harm. Our approach emphasises prevention, de-escalation, and emotional regulation, with physical intervention used only as a last resort and only when it is safe, lawful, and proportionate. This policy outlines how staff support children in moments of dysregulation, the very limited circumstances in which physical intervention may be required, and the procedures for recording, reviewing, and communicating such incidents.

8.1 Principles of Positive Handling

Positive handling is grounded in respect for children's dignity, rights, and emotional wellbeing. Staff prioritise relationship-based approaches and use their knowledge of each child's needs, triggers, and communication style to prevent situations from escalating.

Physical intervention is never used as a form of punishment, discipline, or control. Any handling must be the minimum necessary to prevent injury to the child or others, prevent serious damage to property, or ensure safety during a medical emergency. The overarching principle is always to act in the best interests of the child, with careful consideration of their emotional and physical needs both during and after the incident.

8.2 De-escalation and Preventative Strategies

De-escalation techniques are the primary means of supporting a child who is experiencing distress, frustration, or loss of control. Practitioners remain calm, use soft tone of voice, model slow breathing, and offer a comforting presence. They use emotion coaching, proximity support, distraction, and gentle redirection to help the child regulate their emotions. The environment may be adapted - such as reducing noise, offering a quiet space, or removing overwhelming stimuli - to prevent further escalation.

Staff are trained to recognise early signs of dysregulation and respond quickly, intervening with attuned, sensitive support long before physical intervention becomes necessary.

8.3 Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

Restrictive physical intervention is used only in exceptional circumstances where a child is at immediate risk of causing significant harm to themselves or others, or where intervention is required to prevent a serious accident. The intervention must be reasonable, proportionate, and time-limited. Staff use the least restrictive option possible, ensuring that the child's airway, dignity, and freedom of movement are not compromised beyond what is absolutely necessary for safety. As soon as the risk has passed, the physical intervention must stop.

Staff remain aware of their own posture, strength, and positioning, ensuring that no action taken could cause unnecessary distress or injury.

8.4 Recording, Reporting, and Reviewing Incidents

Any incident requiring physical intervention is recorded in detail by the staff involved and reported immediately to the Nursery Manager or designated senior staff member. The record includes the context of the incident, the strategies used prior to intervention, the nature of the physical intervention applied, the duration, and the outcome. Parents are informed on the same day wherever possible, and a meeting may be arranged to discuss the incident in more detail.

All records are reviewed by the Manager to identify any patterns, triggers, or adjustments required to the environment or the child's support plan. Where relevant, the SENCO may be involved to support further assessment or intervention planning.

8.5 Staff Training and Competence

All staff receive training in behaviour support, de-escalation techniques, and safe, appropriate approaches to positive handling. Staff are not permitted to use physical intervention unless they feel confident, competent, and authorised to do so. The nursery ensures that training is refreshed regularly and that new staff receive appropriate induction. Where a child is identified as being at increased risk of needing physical support, the nursery may develop a personalised plan in partnership with the family and relevant professionals.

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The Positive Handling & Physical Intervention Policy ensures that children at Little Lambs Nursery are protected through compassionate, informed practice. Physical intervention is used only when absolutely necessary and is always preceded by skilled de-escalation and emotional support.

By prioritising children's wellbeing, training staff effectively, and maintaining transparent communication with families, the nursery upholds a safe and respectful environment in which children can learn, explore, and grow.

9. Transition Policy

Transitions are significant moments in a child's early life, and thoughtful support during these periods helps children feel secure, confident, and ready for new challenges. Little Lambs Nursery recognises that smooth, sensitive transitions underpin emotional wellbeing and strongly influence how children settle, learn, and form relationships. This policy outlines how we support children and families through all major transitions: beginning nursery, moving between rooms, and preparing to start school. Our approach reflects the EYFS 2025 emphasis on secure attachments, partnership with parents, and continuity of learning. We aim to ensure that each transition is handled with care, clarity, and respect for the unique needs of the child.

9.1 Transition into Nursery

Transitions into nursery life are carefully planned, ensuring that children and families feel welcomed, understood, and supported from the very beginning. Before the child's official start date, two settling-in sessions are offered, allowing children to visit their room, meet their key person, explore the environment, and begin forming connections at their own pace. Parents may stay for part or all of these sessions if they wish, or may choose to leave the child for short periods depending on readiness and comfort. The key person gathers essential information about the child's routines, preferences, comfort items, communication styles, cultural background, and any relevant home experiences, enabling a personalised and responsive approach from day one. This foundation ensures that children enter nursery feeling safe, cared for, and valued as individuals.

9.2 Transitions Between Rooms

As children grow and their developmental needs change, they transition from the 0–2 room to the 2–5 room. These transitions are managed with sensitivity and are planned based on developmental readiness rather than age alone.

When a child is approaching transition, the key person speaks with the family and collaborates with staff in the receiving room to plan a gradual, supportive process. Over at least one week, children spend increasing amounts of time in their new room, supported initially by their existing key person and gradually by their new one. Children explore new play spaces, routines, peers, and practitioners, enabling familiarity to build steadily. Staff share detailed information about the child's learning, preferences, emerging skills, and care needs to ensure that the transition feels seamless and supportive.

9.3 Transition to School

Transition to school marks an important milestone, and Little Lambs Nursery is committed to ensuring this experience is positive, well-coordinated, and developmentally appropriate. Practitioners prepare children through rich experiences that foster independence, confidence, communication, and self-regulation—skills essential for successful school readiness.

As the transition approaches, staff compile a detailed transition report summarising the child's development, interests, strengths, learning behaviours, and areas for continued support. With parental consent, this report is shared with the receiving school to support continuity of learning. Where possible, the nursery liaises directly with reception teachers, providing opportunities for professional discussion, information sharing, and joint planning.

For children who may require additional support, transition meetings are arranged to ensure that strategies, adjustments, and interventions are clearly communicated to the school team.

9.4 Emotional Wellbeing During Transitions

The emotional impact of transitions is recognised and respected at every stage. Staff provide reassurance, familiarity, and consistent support throughout transition periods, helping children manage feelings of

uncertainty, excitement, or hesitation. Children are encouraged to express their emotions and explore their feelings through play, discussion, and stories. Parents are supported through open communication, advice, and opportunities for involvement, ensuring that transitions feel positive for the whole family. Practitioners remain attentive to any changes in behaviour or wellbeing that may arise and respond with sensitivity and care.

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The Transition Policy ensures that children at Little Lambs Nursery experience continuity, emotional security, and sensitive support during all major transitional stages. Whether joining the nursery, moving between rooms, or preparing for school, every transition is planned carefully and collaboratively to reflect the child's needs and promote confidence, resilience, and a strong sense of belonging. Through partnership with families and communication with external professionals, we provide children with the best possible foundation for each new stage of their learning journey.

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