Changes to the EYFS framework from 1 September 2026

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework is mandatory for all early years settings. It sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well, and are kept healthy and safe.

There are two versions of the EYFS framework (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2) for:

- childminders
- group and school-based providers

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Changes from 1 September 2026

Strengthened welfare and safeguarding requirements

Both new EYFS frameworks include updates which:

- bring explicit wording on the safer sleep requirements into the main body of the EYFS, so that providers do not need to refer out to separate guidance
- prohibit the provision of registered childcare from any premises where a banned dog breed (https://www.gov.uk/control-dog-public/banned-dogs) is kept or is present
- require providers to inform Ofsted or their childminder agency (CMA) of allegations of 'harm' (instead of 'serious harm') by anyone living, working, or looking after children at the premises
- require enhanced criminal records checks for volunteers (including those who are supervised) and prevent new employees from commencing employment before receiving their check
- amend the requirements for what providers must tell staff they have to disclose, as part of information that may affect their suitability to work with children

The group and school-based version also requires providers of childcare on domestic premises to notify Ofsted or their CMA of changes to persons aged 16 or over living or working at the premises. This aligns with existing requirements for childminders.

Children's screen use in early years settings

Both new frameworks also require providers to have regard to screen use guidance for early years settings (https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/screen-use). The screen use guidance builds on the guidance for parents published in March 2026 and has been produced with contributions from sector experts including the Digital Standards Early Years Action Group and Early Years Screen Time Advisory Group.

Other changes to the EYFS

Other minor clarificatory changes have been made to both new frameworks. These are mainly to make the existing requirements clearer for providers.

Changes to registration requirements - in relation to banned dog breeds

In addition to the changes to the EYFS frameworks outlined above, the department has also updated registration requirements for early years settings as follows:

- nannies will be prohibited from taking a banned dog breed onto a premises where they are providing childcare, and will be required to take reasonable steps to avoid banned dog breeds being present

- all other voluntarily registered, early years and later years providers will be prohibited from providing registered childcare from any premises where a banned dog breed is kept or present

Early years qualifications requirements and standards

The Early years qualifications requirements and standards document (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-qualification-requirements-and-standards) will also be updated from 1 September 2026, to clarify the Level 2 English requirements.

Find further support

You may also find it helpful to contact your local authority (https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council) or support groups to find out what advice they can offer on the changes.

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