

St. Mary's Primary School



Outdoor Play Policy

What is our aim?

In St. Mary's P.S. our aim is to create an environment that is sufficiently varied, rich, stretching and emotionally secure to help our children to:

- Develop a positive sense of themselves and others, getting to know themselves and what they can do and building a positive disposition to learn
- Develop the confidence to use their communication, language and emerging literary skills for a range of situations and purposes
- Explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about mathematical ideas in a broad range of contexts
- Work at making sense of the world, encountering and exploring creatures, people, plants, tools and materials in natural and real-life situations
- Be active and interactive, developing sensory integration, movement, coordination, control and manipulation
- Nurture their creative curiosity, exploration and play, using the full range of experiences to explore and share creative thoughts, ideas and feelings.

What is the role of the adult?

Adults should be actively involved with children in planned, purposeful play with a balance of adult-led activities and child-initiated activities.

Early Years staff develop a play based approach but with instructional teaching. This approach is flexible and takes into account each child's developmental needs.

Adults should be;

- talking with children in a variety of ways (conversing, discussing, questioning, modelling and commentating)
- Helping children to find solutions to problems
- Developing and extending their language experiences

- Supporting, encouraging and extending their activities by making extra resources available and providing new ideas
- Initiating games and activities then stepping back to allow children to develop these activities themselves
- Joining in games and activities when invited by children
- Observing, assessing and recording achievements and areas of need
- Evaluating observations in order to plan appropriate resources and experiences
- Constantly assessing safety issues
- Being aware of every child's equal right of access to a full outdoor curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated regardless of race, culture, religion, gender or disability
- Providing role models for appropriate clothing i.e. hats, coats

How do we all stay safe?

All staff must be aware of any potential hazards and keep the following in mind....

- When setting out the equipment each day and during sessions, staff must look out for safety and remove any objects such as cans, bottles or dangerous items which may have been left by others. Checks of the play areas will be made daily and weekly by the caretaker and play co-ordinator recording findings.
- Staff outdoors must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care, be vigilant at all times and never leave the area for any reason unless another member of staff has taken over responsibility.
- Staff must be made aware of any medical needs of children outside
- Members of staff outside with the children must maintain appropriate ratios according to the age of the children.
- Hot drinks should not be taken outside
- Parents, volunteers and students helping outdoors must never be left in sole charge .
- All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy removal next day.

- If a child is injured he/she should be handed to a first aider.
- Details of the accident will be written up as soon as possible in the first aid book.
- The child's parent must be informed of the accident and treatment given.
- Children's clothing should be monitored carefully e.g. unfastened shoelaces and buckles, sandals, scarves and ties on anoraks which are too long can easily cause accidents.
- If it is necessary for an adult to put toys away whilst children are still in the outside area, there must always be at least one other member of staff supervising remaining children outside.
- Children are encouraged to climb and balance independently and to be aware of the level of their own abilities. Adults to offer encouragement whilst being aware of their own safety.
- Encourage children to leave space between themselves and the child in front when crossing planks etc.
- Whenever children carry equipment (clearing away) they should be taught how to do it safely and adults should be aware of the risks involved and minimise them to ensure safety.

Providing Equality of Opportunity and Access for all children

We are aware that pupils have different experiences, interests and strengths, which will influence the way in which they learn. In planning for outdoor play we endeavour to have high expectations for all pupils and will aim to provide suitably challenging opportunities to ensure everyone the opportunity to participate in activities fully and effectively.

Closing Statement

Outdoor play is essential for all aspects of a child's development. It provides children with experiences which enable them to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically. In doing so it provides a rich context for the development of their language and encourages positive attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle.

In St. Mary's P.S. Outdoor Play is seen as an integral part of early years provision. We are committed to an ongoing programme of development for the outdoor provision. As this develops over the years the outdoor policy will be reviewed and updated to reflect current thinking and resources.

Ratified by Board of Governors on _____

Signed: _____ (Chairperson)