



EYFS Outdoor Play Policy

*At St Mary's we live love and learn with the
guidance of God.*

Outdoor Play Policy

"The outdoors is the ideal environment for experiential learning, because it offers unique opportunities to be creative, to move around, to be noisy and to take risks. The outdoors is full of special stimuli such as weather, sounds, smells and textures which can enrich and enhance a child's learning environment. Being outdoors enhances all aspects of children's development: social, physical, creative, cultural and personal. Children with these skills well-developed are better able to learn and to retain that learning. "

Foundation Phase The Outdoor Learning Handbook 2009.

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.

Outdoor play should be seen as an integral part of early years provision. At St Mary's, our children are given the opportunity to work in both our indoor and outdoor areas using the resources which best meet their needs on a daily basis all the year round.

The aim of both indoor and outdoor play is to provide a stimulating environment for children's learning in all areas of the EYFS curriculum. Close observation is essential in order to assess children's ability and to ensure appropriate planning and continuity for the outdoor curriculum.

The provision and planning for outdoor play, just as indoor play, must reflect the diversity and richness of the experience and developing interests of the children.

At St Mary's we aim to:

- use the outdoor environment as a context and a natural resource for learning
- include the outdoor area when planning for learning
- enable children to access the outdoor area on a daily basis

- ensure that the outdoor area offers children the opportunity to investigate and explore, problem solve, use their imagination and creativity
- ensure the outdoors offers children opportunities to develop their gross motor skills
- ensure that children enjoy energetic activity outdoors and the feeling of wellbeing that it brings
- observe and assess and record the learning that happens in the outdoor area
- help children to care for the outside environment
- enable children to work on their own and with others
- enable children to develop an appreciation of natural beauty and a sense of wonder about the world
- respect the outdoor environment and to care for living things
- enable children to manage and use the space and freedom afforded by the outdoor area
- give children the opportunity to relax, enjoy and have fun outdoors
- to use tools safely and effectively

Planning Outdoor Play

Adults must consider the following points:

- the specific purpose of the outdoor play
- individual, co-operative and parallel play
- skills, knowledge, concepts and attitudes to be acquired/developed by the children
- appropriate use of resources
- staff interaction, guidance and support
- balance/breadth of curriculum provision
- alteration, addition or removal of resources
- quality play

The Role of the Adult Outdoors

Adults should be actively involved with children in their games and activities where appropriate and should not be solely in a supervisory role. Adult observations should be recorded at an appropriate time and should not impact upon their involvement with the learning of the child.

Adults should:

- talk with children in a variety of ways (conversing, discussing, questioning, modelling and commentating)

- help children to find solutions to problems
- support and encourage
- extend their activities by making extra resources available and providing new ideas
- initiate games and activities
- join in games and activities when invited by children
- observe, assess and record
- be aware of safety issues
- be 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
- evaluating observations in order to plan appropriate resources and experiences
- providing role models for appropriate clothing i.e. hats, coats, boots to suit weather conditions

In these ways adults are making positive contributions to the children's play and setting up challenging situations for children to experience.

Adults must also be sensitive to times when children do not want adult involvement in their work and play.

Recording and Assessment

Records of the children's development and progress when outside are made through observations and assessments. These observations are then recorded in their individual Development Files. Examples of the children's work may be kept and exhibited on display in the classroom and in the outdoor environment.

Observation sheets should be shared with the team and next steps for children discussed.

Safety Outdoors

The safety of the children is a priority each day and regular checks of equipment and the area are carried out. As we want our children to be independent learners, all children should be taught to work safely with the equipment as well as how to safely transport and store it.

- When setting out the equipment each day and during sessions, staff must look out for safety and remove any objects which may have been left by others.
- Staff outdoors must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care, be vigilant at all times and never leave for any reason unless another member of staff has taken over responsibility.
- A ratio of 1:13 must be maintained.

- Water is provided for all on hot days and sun cream applied. Children will be encouraged to use sheltered areas for games.
- Parents and students helping outdoors must never be left in charge of the outdoor area.
- All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy removal next day.
- Details of any accident must be written up as soon as possible in the incident book. The child's parent must be informed of the accident and treatment given. A record of near misses should also be shared with staff
- 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
- Children are encouraged to climb and balance independently and to be aware of the level of their own abilities. Adults should offer encouragement whilst being aware of their own safety.
- Encourage children always to look before they move on the slide, or when jumping off apparatus; also encourage children to leave space between themselves and the child in front when crossing planks or climbing up/down apparatus.
- The adult: child ratio must always be maintained in the outdoors environment.