

EYFS OUTDOOR PLAY POLICY

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MONITORING AND REVIEW

Staff Responsible	Head of Prep, Head of Pre-Prep
Reviewed by	SLT
Approved by	SLT
Frequency of Review	Annually
Date of Last Review	November 2024
Date of Next Review	November 2025

The School refers to all staff and students in St Mary's School, which includes the Early Years/Foundations Stage (EYFS), the Preparatory Department (Years 1-6), Senior House (Years 7-11) and the Sixth Form (Years 12-13).

The term 'parent' refers to those who have parental responsibility for a child.

WIDER REFERENCES

This policy operates within a wider national framework, which includes:

- EYFS Statutory Framework

RELATED POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- EYFS Policy
- Curriculum Policy

GENERAL

Outdoor play is essential for all aspects of a child's development. It can provide 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. It is the policy of the Early Years that outdoor play is an integral part of our provision available to those children who wish to access it. In Early Years when children are involved in self-chosen activities, they move freely between indoor and outdoor areas using the resources which best meet their needs.

We believe that outdoor play is equally as important as indoor play and in fact some children learn best when in the outdoor environment. In addition, staff fully trained in Forest School lead regular activities for children in Early Years.

The aim of both indoor and outdoor play is to provide a stimulating environment for children's learning in all areas of the Early Years 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.

THE OUTDOOR AREA

The outdoor area consists of a wide, open space, a woodland learning area and a covered area which provides for:

- challenging and exciting play - grassed and hard areas are wide enough for safe, easy play with a safety surface area for climbing equipment
- shady areas
- a sand and water tray
- quiet, reflective areas and busy, moving play areas developing exploration and imagination
- opportunities for large scale experiences

In addition, our Forest School has

- growing/digging areas that provide opportunities for finding mini-beasts, planting, sowing seeds and harvesting, providing opportunities for environmental science, caring and responsibility
- wild areas - plants, wild flowers and trees, logs and shrubs to attract insects

OUTDOOR PLAY

When planning outdoor play, we 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

To ensure balance and breadth of provision, we will have clear goals for children's learning, at the same time being responsive to children's interests. Within the planning there should be flexibility to meet individual children's needs as they arise during the session. Resources should be available to enhance and extend their play.

ROLE OF THE ADULT OUTDOORS

There should be a balance of child-initiated play, adult-initiated and adult-led activities. Adults should be actively involved with children in their games and activities where appropriate and should not be solely in a supervisory role.

Adults should be:

- talking with children in a variety of ways (conversing, discussing, questioning, modelling and commentating)
- helping children to find solutions to problems
- supporting, encouraging
- extending their activities by making extra resources available and providing new ideas
- initiating games and activities
- joining in games and activities when invited by children
- observing, assessing and recording
- being aware of 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
- evaluating observations in order to plan appropriate resources and experiences

In these ways, adults make positive contributions to the children's play and set up challenging situations for children to experience.

SAFETY OUTDOORS

When setting out the equipment each day and during sessions, staff are required to be safety conscious.

Staff on duty outdoors must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care, be vigilant at all times and never leave the outdoor area for any reason unless another member of staff has taken over responsibility. Children should be discouraged from behaviours such as using sticks as weapons. It is most important for staff to move around the outdoor areas constantly so that all areas are adequately supervised.

At the end of the session the outdoor areas should be scanned carefully in case children are left outside unsupervised. All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy removal next day.

If a child is injured, in the first instance she should be referred to a Paediatric First Aider. If further treatment is required, she should be taken to the School Nurse. Details of the accident must be



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written up as soon as possible in the first aid book. The child's parent must be informed of the accident and treatment.

Climbing apparatus should be set out on the grass/bark and safety surface areas whenever possible. If the hard areas are used, safety mats should cover the surrounding area. Children's clothing should be monitored carefully e.g. unfastened shoelaces and buckles, scarves and ties on anoraks which are too long can easily cause accidents, particularly on wheeled toys.

Children will be encouraged to look before they jump off apparatus; children will also be encouraged to leave space between themselves and the child in front when crossing planks or climbing up/down apparatus.

Whenever children carry equipment they should be taught how to do it and adults should be aware of the risks involved and minimise them to ensure safety.