



St. Gabriel's RC Primary School

EYFS Outdoor Learning Policy

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Introduction

Our Early Years setting has a large outdoor space, which is an extension of the children's learning environment. We have a large grassed area and a concrete section, which is under cover. We value time outdoors and the importance it has on children's development. Outdoors offers a vast amount of links across the prime and specific areas of learning in a way that allows our children to explore the natural world around them. We believe that the outdoor environment is a rich, dynamic and natural space for learning and development in children of all ages.

Intent

At St. Gabriel's we believe that all children have the right to experience and enjoy the essential and special nature of being outdoors and therefore strive to develop and create an interactive, stimulating outdoor space which provides open opportunities for exciting and inspiring learning through play. Furthermore, children thrive and their minds and bodies develop best when they have access to stimulating outdoor environments for learning through play and real experiences. Allowing our children to explore outside is vital for their physical health and development, emotional well-being and promotes cognitive and development and achievement.

We ensure that:

- The outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being
- Opportunities enable children to be engaged, solve problems and do things in a different way
- Adults are role models for children and display the qualities such as motivation, enquiry, willingness to try and a positive attitude.
- All areas of learning are offered through a wide range of holistic experiences, both active and calm, which make the most of what the outdoors has to offer.

Implementation

As explained in more detail in our Early Years Foundation Policy, our learning is planned and tailored to our children across the 7 areas of learning, this is delivered both indoors and outdoors. A range of areas can be focussed upon and supported during outside exploration. Please see the areas of learning below:

Prime Areas

Personal, social and emotional development

Physical development

Communication and Language

Specific Areas

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and design

Children playing outdoors also promotes and develops their learning behaviours (Characteristics of Effective Learning). There are many opportunities for children to learn by playing and exploring, being active, creative and critical thinking. Having a large space for the children to explore can be liberating, our children have room to be active, noisy, messy and work on a large scale which has huge positive effects on a child's self-esteem and confidence.

To achieve our intent we ensure that:

- Children can explore the natural world around them

- Caring for the environment is modelled and expected
- The environment offers experiences and resources that children can experience learning on a different scale in comparison to being indoors.
- First hand experiences are explored when possible E.g weather, seasons and the natural world
- Outdoor learning is enhanced by an environment that is richly resourced with play materials that can be adapted and used in different ways.
- Children have the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant
- Adults are enthusiastic about the outdoors and understand the importance of outdoor learning.
- Adults are skilled in scaffolding learning, observing and recording where appropriate.
- Children are encouraged to make their own choices and lead their own learning with appropriate support from an adult.
- Resources will be continually monitored and reviewed to ensure high quality, purposeful learning is available at all times.
- Outdoors is inclusive and facilities and learning opportunities will be adapted whenever possible to enable all children to use them.
- Adults will support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment and teaching the children how to be safe and aware of others.
- Adults will follow the school health and safety policy but will also try to ensure they spot risks on the spot and eliminate these. E.g Construction building on 'boggy' grass.

Impact

Our children will feel safe and stimulated, they will ask questions, volunteer ideas, set out to solve problems and take risks and manage these. Children will see the relevance of their learning as it is meaningful to their lives, interesting

and worth the effort and persistence, which leads to sustained learning and progress over time. Offering choice and flexibility enables ambitious personal goals being set for themselves, having fun working with their peers or independently. They become adaptable in the face of challenges, thus leading to transferable skills and applications in a wide range of contexts. Our children will have a strong sense of confidence and self-esteem which has been developed through the outdoors, its dynamic nature means that it provides opportunities that may be unpredictable and support experiences and emotional development. Having an inclusive outdoor provision, which is responsive for those who need to be active, have space, sensory needs, language stimulation makes it a vital learning environment. Thus, valuing children's learning styles giving benefits to their self-belief. The opportunities for physical development such as gross motor skills will allow our children to develop coordination, build muscle mass and experiment with moving their bodies. All of which has benefits as a foundation to their learning journey at St. Gabriel's.