

St. Joseph and St. Bede RC Primary School

Outdoor Provision Policy



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Mission Statement

Our school is a welcoming, Catholic community, with Christ at the centre.

Through worship, we come together to listen and speak to God, to spread the Gospel message and to move forward in faith together.

As *“Guardians of life and creation”*; we work together with respect, understanding, honesty and joy, to develop love, tolerance and justice for all.

We strive for greatness in our learning, we develop our unique talents and each day we take pride in all our efforts and achievements.

Rational

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.

Outdoor play should be seen as an integral part of Early Years provision.

At St Joseph and St Bede’s School the aim of both indoor and outdoor play is to provide a stimulating environment for children’s learning in all areas of the curriculum.

Aims

- For the outdoor environment to be a continuation of the indoor environment with continuous provision available for all children including those with special needs.
- For the outdoor provision to be available for the whole session providing a balance between adult led and child initiated experiences.
- To provide protective clothing encouraging the children to experience the outdoors in all weathers.
- To observe, assess and record children’s learning in the outdoor provision.

The Outdoor Area

The outdoor area is well laid out and provides for

- Challenging and exciting play
- Safety
- Different levels of play- flat, hilly, sloping and grassed, hard surfaced areas, shady areas etc
- Growing/digging areas - garden soil, compost, tubs, and vegetable and flower beds

- Planting tubs – gardening for different seasons, sowing seeds, providing opportunities for environmental science caring and responsibility
- Exploring area with trees, shrubs to attract insects and to provide opportunities for finding mini-beast
- A covered sandpit with equipment
- A water tray with equipment
- Quiet, reflective areas and busy, moving play areas
- Developing exploration and imagination
- Opportunities for large scale experience

Planning for Outdoor Provision

In planning for outdoor play the following are considered;

- 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, there are clear goals for children’s learning, and adults are at the same time, responsive to children’s enthusiasm and their interests. There is flexibility to meet individual children’s needs as they arise during the session.

Resources are available to enhance and extend their play.

Staff will make notes of children’s’ achievements (through an online learning tool, Tapestry) to keep in individual records, which help to inform future planning.

These records form part of each child’s assessment for their Foundation Stage Profile completed in the Summer Term.

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.

Adults should be

- Talking with children in a variety of ways (conversing, discussing, questioning, modelling and commentating)
- Helping/ encouraging children to find solutions to problems and develop their own thinking skills
- 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.
- Providing role models for appropriate clothing i.e. 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.

Learning Opportunities in the Outdoors

There are many opportunities for the following developmental areas to be enhanced outdoors in varied and challenging ways:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Physical Development
- Expressive Arts and Design

Safety in the outdoor area

- 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. Before children go outside a member of staff must check the gates are closed.
- 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 play area for any reason unless another member of staff has taken over responsibility.
- At the end of the session the areas should be checked carefully to ensure no children are left outside unsupervised.
- The climbing frame must be supervised at all times.
- All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy removal next day.
- If a child is injured the child should be treated with the first aid kit and a record made on safeguarding monitor.
- 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 and climbing equipment.
- Children are encouraged to climb and balance independently and to be aware of the level of their own abilities; adults are to offer encouragement whilst being aware of safety.
- Children should be encouraged to always look before jump off apparatus; and take care when using wheeled toys - and watch carefully where they are going and to be aware of other children.

Recording and assessment

Records of the children's development and progress are developed from ongoing observations (Tapestry) to inform their achievements for their Foundation Stage Profile completed at the end of Reception/Nursery. Observations are used to identify specific learning difficulties or successes, to track a child who seems unable to concentrate on an activity for any length of time or more simply to assess use of tools.

Photos and examples of work are also kept to document the process and outcome of their activities outside. Daily observations are noted, which are used to inform future planning and then placed on child's profile. These observations are reported to parents when it is necessary to do so. Assessments of the children's progress are shared with parents in the Autumn and Spring Term (parents evening) and in a written end of year report in the Summer term. In nursery this information is shared through informal drop in sessions and an end of year report.

Equal opportunities

All children will have access to the Outdoor Provision regardless of gender, special needs, race, home or cultural background.

Parental Involvement

The importance of learning through play is stressed to parents on their initial visit to the school and they are invited to help in many ways once their child is settled in school. We always encourage extra parental help for teddy bears' picnics, outings to the local woods, bug hunts and other activities.