

# Early Years Foundation Stage Outdoor Policy



## **St. Mary's RC Primary School**

### **Mission Statement**

- We will always open our doors wide in welcome.
- We will always love and care for each other as Jesus taught us.
- We will always place the Word of God at the heart of our School.
- We will always worship God our Father.
- We will always be witnesses to Jesus Christ by following in his footsteps.

Written by: Bernie Layfield

Date written: September 2024

Approved by governors on: October 2024

Policy will be reviewed: September 2026

*“When children play out of doors, they are exercising their growing intellectual and emotional muscles, as well as their physical ones. They are developing the power to think, to feel, to do, to see and understand, to represent and express. They are imagining, puzzling, wondering, exploring, befriending and sharing”.*

*“Can I: Play Out” Outdoor Play in the Early Years – Bradford LEA 1995  
Taken from the forward written by Mary Jane Drummond*

*“The best classroom and the widest cupboard is in the open air”.  
Margaret Macmillan*

**At St Mary’s we believe that:**

- Outdoor play is central to young children’s learning.
  - Indoors and outdoors is viewed as one combined and integrated environment.
  - Outdoors is both a teaching and learning environment, where adults interact with children to extend their knowledge, skills and concepts.
  - Outdoor design and layout is given careful consideration.
  - The outdoor classroom offers children the opportunity to use effective styles of learning; playing, movement and sensory experience.
  - Children are given a wide range of open-ended equipment and environments.
  - Children are able to control, change and modify their environment.
- These are the key principles that underpin effective outdoor play.

Each of the Early Years Foundation Stage learning areas are developed through Outdoor Play.

**1. Developing Personal, Social and Emotional Learning Through Outdoor Play**

- The resources and experiences outside provide opportunities for children to develop co-operation and build relationships.
- Children are encouraged to work together, take turns and help each other.
- Children are encouraged to take responsibility for the resources in the outside area. They are able to set up the areas and tidy resources away.
- The organisation and management of outdoors supports children in initiating and developing their own ideas and interests.
- Children are encouraged to develop a sense of wonder about living things and natural phenomena.
- Children develop their understanding and show respect for living things.
- The resources and experiences outside provide opportunities for children to act out their feelings.

**2. Developing Communication, Language and Literacy Through Outdoor Play**

- There is a good range of stimulating first-hand experiences for children and adults to talk about.

- There are places for children to talk with each other.
- Reading and writing are incorporated into activities and experiences. They are relevant and meaningful to children's interests and patterns of learning.
- Children are encouraged to use the written word or write for a range of purposes, e.g. signs, messages, tickets.
- Non-fiction books are a stimulus for investigations outdoors.
- Stories are told/read/re-enacted outside.
- Children are encouraged to express their ideas, interests through role play.

### **3. Developing Mathematical Learning Through Outdoor Play**

- Children are encouraged to explore patterns, shape, measurement and numbers in the natural and made world. There are resources to support this range of learning.
- The available resources enable children to solve mathematical problems.
- Staff encourage children to develop and use their mathematical language.
- The range of equipment enables children to work on a large scale.
- Children are encouraged to play mathematical games with large equipment.
- Numbers are incorporated into children's play.
- Children are encouraged to write numbers or record mathematical ideas in relevant and appropriate ways.

### **4. Developing Learning About and Understanding the World Through Outdoor Play**

- Children are encouraged to observe and express their ideas about similarities and differences in the natural world.
- Children are encouraged to explore the physical environment and are able to solve problems in their own way.
- Changes in the weather are used to stimulate investigative work.
- There is a good range of natural and made materials for children and adults to talk about.
- There is a sufficient range of resources to develop children's interest in movement.
- Children are able to use a range of natural and made materials to design, make and build.
- The outside area is organised so that children are provided with opportunities to play out their life experiences and to develop imaginative play.
- Staff support and develop children's imaginative play related to life experiences.
- Staff ensure that all children have access to a wide range of resources and experiences.

### **5. Developing Physical Development Through Outdoor Play**

- The planning of equipment in the outdoor classroom takes into account all stages of children's physical development.
- There is a good range of equipment to develop children's co-ordination and control skills.
- The resources and equipment encourage a variety of ways of using the body.
- The children are presented with challenges that enable them to discover what they are able to do whilst learning about the limitations of their bodies.
- Children are able to experience a variety of different sized materials and use them in a variety of ways.
- Children are encouraged to use their bodies imaginatively e.g. dance, music and movement.
- Staff ensure that boys and girls have equal access to all areas of physical learning.

## **6. Developing Expressive Arts and Design Learning Through Outdoor**

### **Play**

- Children are encouraged to represent their ideas imaginatively. There are a range of materials so that they can create 2D and 3D images.
- Children are encouraged to explore colour, shape and texture within natural materials.
- Staff plan for music, movement, dance, singing and drama to take place in the outside area.
- Children have the opportunity to experience a large range of textures and different materials.
- Opportunities are provided for children to develop large-scale work.
- Appropriate resources are available to support large-scale mark making.

### **Adult Role**

- Staff help children to become aware of the world around them through allowing them to explore the outdoors, stimulating their interest and responding to their connections with the elements and natural environment.
- Staff teach children the skills of using outdoor tools and equipment safely and with care.
- Staff provide a secure and safe environment in which children can take risks and challenge themselves.
- Staff build on children's experiences at home and in other settings.
- Staff plan and observe next steps for children's development using the indoor and outdoor environment.
- Staff foster and promote a sense of responsibility for caring for the environment and living things especially through growing and recycling.
- Staff introduce the correct terminology of natural and living things.
- Staff encourage children to explore their physicality through movement and sound.
- Staff model and demonstrate exploration of the outdoor area, its equipment and appropriate tools and clothing.
- Staff assist children in accessing the outdoor area to practice and develop their individual skills.
- Staff encourage children to work collaboratively, sharing skills, knowledge and enjoyment.
- Staff participate with enthusiasm in children's play.
- Staff should care for and maintain resources.
- Staff are positive role models for parents, by demonstrating and modelling support for children's outdoor play.
- Staff actively encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning and development and value experiences within the outdoor environment.
- Staff create an environment, full of suitable stimuli and challenges
- Staff provide encouragement and just enough support for children to extend their abilities at their own pace
- Staff to conduct a daily risk assessment ensuring the area and resources are safe.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive.

Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All staff who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process and meet regularly to discuss future planning.

The planning within the EYFS is based around the children's interests. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning. However, we may alter these in response to the needs of the children.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observations and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate.