

## OUTDOOR PLAY POLICY



### MISSION STATEMENT

**A diverse and exciting place to learn;  
a place where all children are valued,  
a place that strives for excellence.**

The EYFS states:

‘Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It gives children first-hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world. Outdoor environments offer children freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant.’

“The best classroom and the widest cupboard is roofed only by the sky” Margaret McMillian.

### **Rationale:**

Outdoor learning in early years settings is important because it:

- supports the development of healthy and active lifestyles;
- offers children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement;
- promotes a sense of confidence and well-being,
- provides opportunities for developing harmonious relationships with others, through negotiation, turn taking and cooperation;
- supports those children who learn best through activity or movement;
- provides safe and supervised opportunities for children to experience new challenges, assess risk and develop the skills to manage difficult situations;
- supports children’s developing creativity and problem-solving skills;
- provides rich opportunities for imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness;

- gives children contact with the natural world and offers them unique experiences, such as direct contact with the weather and seasons.
- Develops a sense of care and respect for the natural world, themselves, their friends and community.

At Basnett Street Nursery School we ensure that learning outdoors is given equal status as indoor learning and is planned for as an integral part of the play and learning provision for EYFS.

Children have daily access to the outdoor environment for both continuous provision and focussed activities; this is further complimented with weekly sessions to our onsite forest school, run by our fully qualified forest school leader. (see forest school policy) Wherever possible, inside and outside should complement one another, and learning in one area should reinforce learning in the other. All areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

The outdoor area is richly resourced with exciting play materials and open ended flexible resources, many of which are natural, that can be adapted to the needs of play, rather than the materials dictating the play, meeting the interests of individual children.

Provision is organised in sheds that ensure that children can independently select and return resources as they need them.

Adults encourage and engage children in shared, sustained thinking, encouraging the child to make choices and decisions to gain the maximum learning potential of the outdoor environment.

We use on-going observational assessments to ensure the learning experiences we provide meet individual needs and interests of the child, recognising that children develop in different ways and at different rates.

We aim to ensure our outdoor environment enables children to become resilient, curious, independent, motivated and expressive learners who are good communicators as to develop our image of the child.

Staff ensure that the needs of all our children – girls, boys, different ethnic groups and children with disabilities - are met through monitoring and reviewing the resources that are available, how they are set up and used to ensure that the outside area provides a rich learning environment that positively encourages inclusive education.

(see Teaching, Learning and Care Policy)

## **EYFS**

### **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 and Language 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.
- Stories are told/read/re-enacted outside.
- Children are encouraged to express their ideas, interests through role play.

## **3. 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.

## **4. Developing Literacy Learning Through Outdoor Play:**

- 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.

#### **5. 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.

#### **6. 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.

#### **7. 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.

### **Clothing:**

Staff and children are provided with wellies to wear for outdoor learning. Only during spells of dry, hot weather are these not worn by children. Wellies are to be worn in all weathers when engaging in water and / or mud play

During cold, wet weather and children are provided with waterproof dungarees and coats. In warm weather these do not need to be worn, except dungarees when engaging in water and/or mud play.

During hot weather sun hats are provided and suncream (see sun care policy)

Winter coats are provided in cold weather, along with mittens.

In the event that children's clothes get wet they are changed in nursery.

### **Risk assessments:**

Good risk management processes are in place, taking all reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children are kept to a minimum. This does not mean removing appropriate experiences that have high developmental benefit; it does mean finding ways for children to engage in them without undue risk of harm

"it is vital that young people learn how to manage risks for themselves in everyday situations, so they become confident and capable adults" learning Outside the Classroom manifesto

Staff recognise the importance of risk assessing to enable rather than risk children's experiences.

### **Health and Safety (see health and safety policy)**

- Site supervisor to check grounds daily and carry out litter collection.
- Regular ground maintenance.
- Staff to do visual check before children access outdoors.
- Child-Adult ratio maintained.
- Risk assessments to be carried out and maintained.

Staff outdoors must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care and be vigilant at all times.

Staff must be made aware of any medical needs of children outside

Children who have had accidents outside should usually be passed to an adult Inside for treatment. Only in exceptional circumstances, if there is a serious accident (such as a fracture), should children be cared for outside. In the event of a serious accident more staff will obviously be needed outside.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This will include:

- Staff observations, discussions and feedback.
- Annually discussing and reviewing the validity of the policy to ensure it is meeting the needs of the children.
- Discussion and feedback from children and parents.

The Governing Body, Headteacher and all staff have been involved in the writing of this policy and will monitor and evaluate it annually.