

Southwold Primary School & Early Years Centre

Outdoor Learning policy

Key principles of outdoor play:

- movement is a vital component of play and other ways of learning and requires space growth and development of brain and body are inseparable
- ample experience in running, climbing and balancing is necessary if children are to learn to read and write successfully
- cramped home conditions of many young active children can restrict movement children are losing the places in society where they can play freely
- the physical right of children to be active must be safeguarded throughout the day and in all weathers
- the potential for heart disease begins in early childhood some learning can only happen outside
- the whole curriculum can be discovered outside
- boys and girls (for the same and different reasons) need freedom to be safely adventurous
- Outdoor play is central to young children's learning
- Indoors and outdoors is viewed as one combined and integrated environment
- Outdoors receives planning, management, evaluation, resourcing, staffing, and adult interaction on a par with indoors
- Outdoors is both a teaching and learning environment 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 should be given a wide range of open-ended equipment and environments
- Children should be able to control, change and modify their environment
- Staff time is organised to support children's learning over time

The value of outdoor play:

"Play as disposition is to do with children's need to explore: with their intrinsic motivation; with the ways in which they pay attention; with their active engagement and involvement in the world around them. These dispositions are intrinsic to learning, and to children becoming lifetime learners".

Supporting Early Learning – Vicky Hurst & Jenefer Joseph 1998

"Frequent lack of attention to the external environment must come from some bizarre assumption that knowledge acquired indoors is superior to that gained outside".

Early Childhood Education – Tina Bruce

"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

Aims

Outdoor activities should reflect and extend the curriculum. Most children can relate to outdoor play and it is the one experience that they are likely to have in common before coming to school, be it through playing in the backyard, the park, the street or the garden. Through outdoor play children can develop:

- Language and literacy
- Physical strength and confidence Spatial awareness
- Gross and fine motor skills
- A sense of freedom, exhilaration and self-expression
- Opportunities to build on their natural motivation and curiosity about the world in which they live
- An understanding of the effect of their actions upon other people and the environment Opportunities to develop tactile and sensory awareness
- An understanding of the wide range of natural resources and phenomena in the changing world outside
- Knowledge, understanding and skills in all areas of learning and experience

A well-planned outdoor environment contributes to the development of the whole child, and provides opportunities for the adults to observe and record young children’s development in different contexts.

General Guidance

- The outdoor area is available to every child on a daily basis, at playtime and at other times for outdoor learning
- If children are choosing not to play out in very cold weather, provision for physical play is made indoors
- Spare clothing is made available for any child who is inadequately dressed for the weather
- We recognise the value of children experiencing other outdoor environments, e.g. going for walks

Adult Role

Planning, Evaluation and Monitoring

- Monitoring through evaluation is valued and informs future planning
- We plan for the outdoor area in the long, medium and short term
- Outdoor learning is monitored alongside the other monitoring procedures established for the classrooms

Adult Involvement

At least 2 members of staff are on duty each playtime to supervise and extend the play.

Health and Safety

Risk assessments are made on a regular basis, with specific risk assessments for the trim trail, allotment, climbing wall etc.

Approved by the Strategic Development Committee:

To be reviewed: