



St Raphael's Catholic Primary School

Outdoor Learning Policy

Rational

At St Raphael's Catholic Primary School, we define the outdoor environment as outdoor space located by the nursery and reception class. We believe the outdoor environment is a learning environment just as indoors and should be of equal importance. The outdoor environment provides learning experiences and opportunities which cannot be provided indoors. The outdoor environment should complement the indoor learning environment and offer activities in a much larger, messier, noisier and bolder way! It should provide opportunities for living things to be observed in the natural environment and for the weather, seasons and the effects of these to be observed and experienced first-hand.

We believe that all children should have continuous access to the outdoor environment on a daily basis. The outdoor environment should allow the children to have choice in their learning and in the activities that they choose.

We believe the outdoor environment can help us to encourage children to be more physically active, enjoy recreation, develop socially, take an active role in planning their own learning and feel confident to express their feelings.

Foundationyears.org.uk states:

'Outdoor learning is a crucial element of the EYFS Framework. Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and development. It 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, take risks and be physically active and exuberant.'

Purposes/Outcome

We want:

- children to have access to the outdoor environment on a continuous and daily basis
- to ensure the outdoor environment provides opportunities to develop their large motor skills
- children to be able to take risks in their play
- the children to have the opportunity for energetic play, exercise and fresh air
- to observe, assess and record the learning that happens in the outside environment
- children to plan and have ownership of the learning that happens in the outside environment

- children to care for the outside environment in and out of school
- to enable children to work on their own and with others
- children to have the opportunity to relax, enjoy and have fun outdoors
- children to play in a large space
- children to experiment with noise and sound
- to give children an opportunity to become involved with messy activities
- to help children to settle in to school
- children to make discoveries and to add a new dimension to activities in a different environment.

The Weather

Children at St Raphael's have the opportunity to explore outdoor learning in a variety of weather conditions. Children should have the appropriate clothing to enable them to do this safely such as being encouraged to wear sun hats in the summer months. Children will have the opportunity to come indoors if they are too hot and have access to drinking water.

Alternatively, children and staff are encouraged to wrap up in warm suitable clothing in the Autumn and Winter months and have access to wellies and wet weather clothing. Children are able to choose to come inside if they are cold and staff swap over roles. EYFS staff, along with SLT, will liaise if they feel there are extreme weather conditions which may not be suitable or safe for children.

Creativity in the outdoors

The Foundation Stage team strive to enable and encourage creative learning opportunities by providing space, time, resources, and activities. We will encourage use of open-ended resources on a bigger scale, such as den building and large scale loose parts, this promoting problem solving and risk taking, use of imagination and making independent and active choices. A balance of adult and child initiated activities and tasks will be planned for in response to children's interests.

Outdoors at St Raphael's

In the Foundation Stage children:

- have access to outdoor learning for a vast majority of the day
- are encouraged to experience a variety of activities in the outdoor area
- experience a range of adult led and child initiated activities
- have first-hand experiences of nature and wildlife
- are encouraged to explore the natural world using all of their senses
- are given opportunities to develop their large motor skills
- have access to a range of well organised man-made and natural resources which are well cared for are encouraged to care for and take responsibility for the resources available to them

In the Foundation Stage adults:

- ✓ play alongside children as well as initiating focused activities
- ✓ are flexible and aware of the importance of building on children's prior experiences and interests
- ✓ scaffold and support children's learning
- ✓ observe learning taking place and plan further challenges
- ✓ ensure resources are well organised and easily accessible for all children
- ✓ share ideas and information about the outdoor area
- ✓ provide positive role models showing respect and care for the outdoor area
- ✓ plan for opportunities in the outdoor area which build on children's interests.
- ✓ Listen to the views of the children

Planning for the outdoor provision.

Every staff member of the Foundation Stage will take responsibility for an area of learning in the outdoor environment. Mrs McLeod is the outdoor lead for Nursery and Mrs Sheilds and Miss Wilson for Reception. They oversee the weekly planning and other members of the team are responsible for resourcing and maintaining their chosen areas. The Foundation Stage team will hold regular meetings to maintain good standards of outdoor practice.

Safety

The outdoor area is checked for health and safety reasons every morning by a member of the caretaker. Whilst EYFS are setting up the area, they will also check the area. In addition to this, there is a risk assessment in place for outdoors learning.

DATE: 24th November 2020

