



SS John Fisher & Thomas More Catholic Primary School

A Voluntary Academy

"Journeying together with Jesus Christ, we learn to love and love to learn."



EYFS Outdoor Learning Policy

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Governor committee responsibility:	Local Governing Body



EYFS Outdoor Learning Policy

Aims

St John Fisher and Thomas More we aim to provide a safe, stimulating learning environment both indoors and outdoors. We know that the outdoor environment can open up a range of learning opportunities not possible inside and therefore we value outdoor learning in the same way we value learning indoors.

When children play outside it provides them with an opportunity to experience nature and the world around them first hand. Children can explore and investigate without the same physical boundaries they are limited by inside. Outside, children can explore concepts on a large scale, investigate and explore using their senses, create 'mess' and enjoy the sensory stimulation this brings and develop physically in a way not possible inside. With this in mind, it is our aim to provide an outdoor environment that is not a mirror image of the indoor. **We want our outdoor environments in EYFS to provide a different, but equally valuable, type of learning to the indoor environments.**

Planning and Provision Outside

Children should be able to learn outdoors across the full EYFS curriculum. They should have opportunities to socialise, communicate, explore the world, develop their physical skills, explore mathematical concepts, be creative, mark-make and read print. This does not simply mean setting up a table outdoors with some paper and pens! Staff need to consider the appropriateness of the outdoor activities they provide and ask themselves the following questions before setting up any activity outside:

- Does it provide a different learning opportunity to the indoor environment?
- Could it be done inside?
- Why am I setting up this activity (assessment information/children's interest/observation analysis)

Continuous Provision Outdoors

Continuous Provision outdoors should be as well organised and planned for in the same way as the indoor continuous provision. Resources that are out all year round should be stored in clear plastic boxes with photo labels attached to enable the children to self-select. As above, the resources available in these boxes should not be the same resources available inside. Children should be encouraged to return resources back to their place once they have finished and they should not be limited by adults in their choices when accessing outdoor continuous provision.

Children should have access to the outdoor environment in all weathers except where the weather conditions have made the outdoor space unsafe (thunderstorms, extreme high winds, icy surfaces). As soon as the outdoor area becomes safe and the weather improves, children must be given access to the outdoor area again immediately.

In order to maintain appropriate staff-child ratios, if there is only one member of staff in the outdoor area Reception and Nursery 2 will use a banding system (13 bands for 1 adult). Children can freely access the outdoor area as long as there is a band available. If there is no band the children will need to wait for a band to become available and staff will encourage turn taking using this system. Staff must monitor which children have already been outside to ensure all children have access to the outdoor area every day. If two adults are outside children will not need to use bands and can free flow between the indoor and outdoor environments.

Two-year olds will not use a banding system due to lower numbers of children. Staff in the two-year old provision will monitor how many children are outside and move staff accordingly. Where possible two year olds will be able to free flow between the indoor and outdoor environment.

Outdoor Enhancements

Enhancements to the outdoor provision will be reviewed on a weekly basis but may not change every week (depending on the interest of the children). Enhancements will be added based on assessment and observation information, consolidation of learning opportunities or the children's interests. Staff should always be able to explain why an activity has been added to the outdoor area. When adding a new activity, staff should always seek to model the new activity to the children. Modelling may only take a few minutes but it is vital to encouraging purposeful play in the outdoor area. Although it may seem obvious to an adult, children view the world very differently and may not understand how to interact with an activity without being shown first.

In summary, enhancements outside should:

- Be added based on assessments, consolidation of learning or the children's interests.
- Be modelled to the children (this may be done in phases or in small groups)
- Be different to the enhancements inside
- Be reviewed on a weekly basis

Health and Safety Outside

Providing a safe learning environment inside and outside at St John's is a priority of ours. It is vital that in order to keep children safe in our outdoor environments adults do the following:

- Review the overall risk assessments for the Reception and Nursery Outdoor environments regularly and adapt them if the environments change.
- Ensure all toys and resources are tidied away appropriately at the end of the day – the adult outside is responsible for this each day, if tidying up does not happen with the children due to unforeseen circumstances the adult MUST return to the outdoor area after school to tidy it properly.
- Ensure children wear the appropriate footwear and clothing outside to keep them safe
- Ensure sun cream and sunhats are worn in warm weather
- Encourage safe play and manage behaviour effectively to prevent unnecessary accidents.