





Early Years Outdoor Area Policy





Sept 2026–2027

Rationale

The outdoors can provide a scale and freedom for a type of play that is difficult to replicate indoors.

(Curriculum Framework for Children 3 to 5)

Outdoor learning makes a major contribution to children's development. Young children will be missing out on important learning opportunities if quality outdoor provision is not available to them regularly.

(The Great Outdoors by Margaret Edgington)

Aim

To create an outdoor area which is stimulating, exciting and used throughout the year as a learning environment.

Outdoor provision will support all areas of learning and development outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework (2024), particularly physical development, understanding the world, and personal, social and emotional development. Planning will reflect opportunities to extend indoor learning into the outdoor environment.

Objectives

We aim to:

- use the outdoor environment as a context and a natural resource for learning.
- include the outdoor area when planning for learning.
- enable children to access the outdoor area on a daily basis.
- ensure that the outdoor area offers children the opportunity to investigate and explore, problem solve, use their imagination and creativity.
- ensure the outdoors offers children opportunities to develop their gross motor skills.
- ensure that children enjoy energetic activity outdoors and the feeling of well being that it brings.
- observe and assess and record the learning that happens in the outdoor area.
- help children to care for the outside environment.
- enable children to work on their own and with others.
- enable children to develop an appreciation of natural beauty and a sense of wonder about the world.
- respect the outdoor environment and to care for living things.
- enable children to manage and use the space and freedom afforded by the outdoor area.
- give children the opportunity to relax, enjoy and have fun outdoors.
- to use tools safely and effectively.

The outdoor area will encourage children to engage in sustainable practices, such as recycling, composting, planting, and caring for wildlife. This helps to build environmental responsibility and respect for the natural world.

Method

The staff will:

- facilitate access to the outdoor area on a daily basis through discussion and staff meetings, planning and mutual agreement.
- organise and provide necessary resources as appropriate, e.g. footwear, tools, etc.
- encourage children to use a variety of natural resources.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This will include:

- staff observations, discussions and feedback from children and parents
 - discuss and review the validity of the policy to ensure it is meeting the needs of the children.
- The EYFS Lead will review the outdoor area provision termly, ensuring it continues to meet children's developmental needs and statutory requirements. Governors with responsibility for EYFS will be informed of developments and next steps as part of curriculum monitoring.

Health & Safety and Safeguarding

The outdoor area will be subject to daily risk assessments before use. Staff will ensure that equipment is safe, age-appropriate and well maintained. Safeguarding procedures, including supervision ratios, apply equally outdoors. Staff will be vigilant to ensure children remain within designated boundaries and that any visitors to the area are monitored in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Inclusion and Accessibility

The outdoor environment will be accessible to all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Adaptations will be made where necessary to ensure equal access to play and learning opportunities, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the school's Accessibility Plan.

Next Steps.

Fill the flowerbeds with more soil and create a new and exciting mud kitchen.

Ensure all equipment is clearly labelled to aid keeping it tidy.

Use the new water pump and revamp the water area.