



OUTDOOR LEARNING POLICY

Our Mission

At St. Anne's we aim to be a caring Christian school, within the community where everyone is respected and valued. To be a school where all individuals are encouraged to build on their strengths and aspire to be the best they can be.

Our Vision

Our vision has the promise by Jesus of 'life in all its fullness at its heart. At St Anne's we believe:

- in our children and each other,
- we are uniquely created in the image of God,
- we were made to be awesome,
- that together we are family,
- we were created to live in community,
- in equipping the St Anne's family to be the best we can be,
- in our individual talents and abilities, and
- we can make a difference.

Our Values

At St Anne's CE Primary School, the following core values underpin all that we do. They are reflected in the daily life of the school and our relationships with other:

Respect, Thankfulness, Hope, Forgiveness, Love and Faithfulness.

'...let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven.' *Matthew 5:16*

'I thank you because I am awesomely made...' *Psalms 139:14*

'...I come that they may have life and have it to the full.' *John 10:10*

Intent

The Department for Children, Schools and Families has found that there is evidence that when learning outside the classroom, children:

- attain higher levels of knowledge and skills
- improve their physical health and increase their motor abilities
- socialise and interact in new and different ways with their peers and adults
- show improved attention and enhanced self-concept, self-esteem and mental health
- change their environmental behaviours and their values and attitudes.

The outdoors can provide space and freedom for a type of learning that is difficult to replicate indoors. All children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. At St Anne's Primary we feel it is important to enable children to use the outside environment as a context for learning throughout the year.

Implementation

Possibilities for outdoor learning will be considered throughout our planning, using it as a context and a natural resource for learning. We will:

- ensure that the outdoor space harnesses the special nature of the outdoors, to offer children what the indoors cannot. (This should be the focus for outdoor provision, complementing and extending provision indoors.)
- ensure that our outdoor area and resources within it are flexible and versatile, where children can choose, create, change and be in charge of their play environment.
- support inclusion and meet the needs of individuals, offering a diverse range of play-based experiences.
- enable children to access the school gardens and grounds on a regular basis.
- ensure that children enjoy energetic activity outdoors and the feeling of wellbeing that it brings, including opportunities to develop their large motor skills.
- observe, assess and record outdoor learning, ensuring that there is adequate provision for children to extend their learning.
- plan for outdoor learning with the children to offer experiences which have meaning to them and which are led by the child.
- enable children to work both individually and co-operatively outside.
- enable children to appreciate the beauty of nature; encouraging children to use a variety of natural resources.
- give children the opportunity to find a quiet space to relax.
- encourage children to enjoy and have fun outdoors in many contexts.
- work together (children, staff, parents, community) to create a better environment for all.
- organise and/or provide necessary resources (e.g. Wellington boots, raincoats).
- enable children to use resources safely and to manage and use the space and freedom responsibly.
- help children to take responsibility and care for the outside environment and resources within it.
- encourage children to respect their environment and to care for living things.

Impact

Outdoor Learning is a broad term that includes: outdoor play [learning through play], school grounds projects, environmental education, recreational and adventure activities, personal and social development ... and more. Outdoor Learning does not have a clearly defined boundary but it does have a common core... It can provide a dramatic contrast to the indoor classroom. Direct experience outdoors is more motivating and has more impact and credibility. The results from outdoor learning can be instantaneous as well as active and therefore impact on behaviour as well as tapping into the learning styles of the more kinaesthetic learner. Through skilled teaching, interpretation or facilitation, outdoor experiences readily become a stimulating source of fascination, personal growth and can lead to breakthroughs in learning. Active learning readily develops the learning skills of enquiry, experiment, feedback, reflection, review, communication, problem solving, an enterprising attitude and cooperative learning – to name only some of the benefits. Outdoor Learning can help to bring many school subjects alive as they focus on real results and consequences. For that reason the outdoors can have an impact on areas of the curriculum as diverse as imaginative writing and moral education [personal search]. Outdoor learning also provides experiential opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change. There is strong evidence that good quality learning outside the classroom adds much value to classroom learning. It can lead to a deeper understanding of the concepts that span traditional subject boundaries and which are frequently difficult to teach effectively using classroom methods alone. Quality learning experiences in 'real' situations have the capacity to raise achievement across a range of subjects and to develop better personal and social skills. When these experiences are well planned, safely managed and personalised to meet the needs of every child they can:

- Improve academic achievement.
- Provide a bridge to higher order learning.
- Develop skills and independence in a widening range of environments.
- Make learning more engaging and relevant to young people.
- Develop active citizens and stewards of the environment.
- Nurture creativity.
- Provide opportunities for informal learning through play.
- Reduce behaviour problems and improve attendance.
- Stimulate, inspire and improve motivation.
- Develop the ability to deal with uncertainty.
- Provide challenge and the opportunity to take acceptable levels of risk.
- Improve young people's attitudes

Health and Safety

We will support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. It is important to ensure that the outdoor environment offers challenges and teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others. Outdoor learning opportunities will be grasped when available and teachers will assess risk. Risk Assessments will be carried out where appropriate. School Health and Safety Policy will be followed.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment of the children's learning will be valued equally indoors and outdoors and should be part of the same process. Subject leaders will be responsible for monitoring their subject area outdoors.

Review

This policy was reviewed in October 2022 and will be reviewed again in September 2023.