



The Shrubberies School. Outdoor Play and Learning Policy



Introduction:

This policy has been shared and approved by the teaching staff and school Governors. The Shrubberies school is committed to providing high quality learning experiences in a range of outdoor environments.

Aims:

- To develop safe, stimulating outdoor areas on site in which children can explore, take risks and thus develop their curiosity and understanding.
- To raise the profile of outdoor play and learning across all subjects, giving it a valued place within the school's approach to educating children.
- To implement the 'OPAL' (Outdoor Play and Learning) ethos, through emphasis on play worker roles and training staff in the skills needed for quality play supervision during active break times.
- To provide enriched, multi-sensory experiences that will complement children's learning in other areas of the curriculum.
- To highlight opportunities for learning in the locality around school.
- To teach children to care for and appreciate their environment with a relative understanding of environmental issues.
- To practice gross and fine motor skills in true to life situations.
- To observe and celebrate child-led play and learning.

Entitlement:

The requirements of the National Curriculum are followed for each key stage and progression is supported by outdoor learning.

There is a legal obligation to implement the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child, which includes the right to play, recreation and leisure. (Article 31). Each child has a right to be listened to on matters important to them. (Article 12)

Children will feel safe and secure during outdoor learning sessions. They will be treated with respect and fairness. Opportunities will be created for healthy and enjoyable exercise.

Content:

Content is guided by-

- The EYFS Framework Document.
- Learning outside the classroom manifesto. (DCSF publication)
- Woodland Trust : <http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk>
- Forest School training guidelines and principles.
- Asdan accreditation modules linked to – Transition Challenge, New Horizons, Personal Progress
- Wild times for schools website. schools.projectwildthing.com

Planning:

Planning is the responsibility of each class teachers for individuals and groups during lesson times.

Differentiation is a priority and achieved through individual target setting, careful groupings within the class and use of equipment appropriate to each individual.

In Early Years, 'free flow' enables the children to choose to use the immediate outdoor space and learning is largely led by the child's interest.

Through key stages 1 -4 outdoor learning is included in routine planning and delivery of subjects throughout the year.

Planning for lunchtime play is the responsibility of the 'OPAL' team, in discussion with all staff.

Play is recognised as an activity that a child enters into that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated and that engages the child. Staff support play as opposed to steering it to fit into planning.

Implementation:

Opportunities for outdoor play learning are implemented by class teachers and the OPAL team with the support of teaching assistants and mid-day supervisors.

They will ensure that –

- the outdoor areas and resources are used in a way that encourages children to choose, create, change and be in charge of their play environment.
- outdoor play and learning takes place in all seasons.
- learning opportunities extend to both formal and informal learning and play.
- wellington boots are requested from home and protective jackets and trousers are provided by school as required.
- children are encouraged to develop and follow a set of rules enabling them to use outdoor areas safely and responsibly.
- activities planned will offer first hand experiences of the world outside of the classroom.
- playtimes are organised with a good adult/child ratio to facilitate child-led play, cooperative play and development of fine/gross motor skills.
- different areas are used with specific outcomes. For example, the pond area lends itself to exploring habitats and life cycles.
- the wider community is used to support subjects including history, geography and science
- the school minibis is used to access opportunities further afield.
- staff draw on expertise from local wildlife and wildfowl trusts – talks and activity days.

Equal opportunities:

Staff at the Shrubberies aim to offer outdoor play and learning to all pupils regardless of gender or ability. Children from all social and cultural backgrounds are encouraged to participate fully and effectively in outdoor play and learning.

Special needs:

All staff are to be aware of any individual physical or medical needs. Many children have a communication passport and communication aids. A 'total communication' approach is valued across all outdoor play and learning experiences. Staff are aware of individuals with a positive behaviour plan and will refer to the content when including them in outdoor play and learning sessions.

The outdoor areas in school will be developed and maintained to ensure accessibility for wheelchair users and those with additional sensory impairment.

IT:

IT devices will be made available to record activities, take photos and videos for use at a later time in class follow-up work.

Resources:

Permanent outdoor resources include:

- Early Years playground
- Primary courtyard
- Trackside courtyard
- Main school playground
- Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)
- Forest School
- Wildlife pond
- Story telling area
- Tuned percussion area
- Outdoor classroom.
- Early years' garden.
- Primary garden
- Senior garden and greenhouse.
- Post 16 grounds and vegetable beds at Apperley centre site.

Within school classes have access to specific subject resources which can be brought outside to support learning.

Forest School area has a shed which is used to store small tools, buckets, magnifying glasses, seasonal materials and equipment for den building.

Class teachers are responsible for resources used and should encourage children to take care of equipment. The subject leader must be advised of any loss and damage and of new items required to support learning.

The OPAL team will be responsible for the planning, providing and recycling of loose materials used during lunchtime play.

Assessment and recording:

Assessment of the children's play and learning is valued equally indoors and outdoors. Class teachers have various formats available to them. Assessment and recording informs future planning.

Teachers report to parents via the annual review meeting (EHCP) and school progress reports.

Monitoring and moderation:

The outdoors can enrich all areas of the curriculum and its contribution is monitored as part of each subject/aspect review. Outdoor learning is identified on the whole school cycle of subject monitoring.

Curriculum reports from SMT are submitted to the Governors.

Child-led play is cross curricular and monitored in terms of a child's engagement.

The OPAL audit tool and pupil surveys will monitor the effectiveness and quality of outdoor play and learning.

The OPAL team will report annually to the Governors.

Health & Safety: (Benefit and risk)

The Shrubberies is committed to adopting a risk/benefit approach and will provide support to staff to implement this approach.

A duty of care is balanced with supporting children to encounter and manage risks for themselves. The school will provide an environment in which the children can take acceptable risks and challenge themselves beyond existing capabilities. The environment will be as safe as it needs to be rather than completely devoid of risk. Loose parts and recycled materials will be provided as part of the OPAL ethos and supervised accordingly.

All outdoor play and learning activities are governed by the school health & safety policy.

School trips off site are routinely risk assessed. Class teachers complete risk assessments where appropriate for their own class to participate in outdoor play and learning activities on site.

The Forest School area, Senior garden and Wildlife/ Pond area are fenced and secured with locks to ensure children can only access them with adequate supervision.

Items of fixed equipment in play areas are subject to standard checks on a periodic basis and records held centrally in the office.

Staff development:

A whole school commitment to the OPAL project offers an element of training to all staff, including midday supervisors. The OPAL team has identified roles and the staff will receive information and guidance from the OPAL consultant. Individual staff will attend further training on play and outdoor learning to maintain a level of current knowledge and good practice in this field. The school is part of the Learning in Nature collaboration based at the WWF (Wildfowl & wetlands) Trust.

Review :

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing body as part of its schedule of policy review.

J A Harris

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