

Rodney House School



# Outdoor Learning and Development Policy

Reviewed: November 2016

Signed by Governor:

## **Introduction**

We value outdoor play as an intrinsic part of the curriculum. By ensuring outdoor play is an integral part of the school routine we consciously seek to convey a positive attitude to the outdoors and enrich the child's understanding of the wider world around him/her.

Active learning experiences outdoors are essential for young children. They give children opportunities to practice their developing skills, make them feel good and to explore their world. It is also important for children's physical, mental and emotional development. We believe that children should begin to take risks and face challenges outdoors. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) fully supports playing and learning outdoors.

## **Aim**

To enhance and enable children's opportunities to engage in a wide range of exciting and challenging outdoor activities as a pathway to learning and development throughout the year. To provide a safe, stimulating outdoor environment where space is used effectively as a context through which children explore a broad and balanced curriculum using a range of interesting resources suitable to their individual needs.

To promote the Healthy Schools Agenda and encourage children to make healthy choices.

## **Responsibility**

The head teacher maintains overall responsibility for Health and Safety.

Maintenance of the outdoor equipment lies with the Health and Safety lead: the school business manager. The caretaker will conduct health and safety checks on a regular basis. The staff will ensure that concerns about equipment and safety are reported immediately.

## **Every Child Matters Outcomes**

### Stay Safe

- Children show determination, adaptability and a healthy attitude towards risk taking. They set themselves realistic but challenging targets and are able to confidently express their ideas.

### Be Healthy

- Children develop an appreciation of the benefits outdoor activities have on their physical health and emotional well-being, and they continue their interests beyond their immediate learning environment.

### Enjoy and Achieve

- Children gain self-awareness personal confidence and self-esteem through taking on challenges, being successful and learning from their mistakes. They demonstrate increased initiative, self-reliance, responsibility, perseverance and commitment.

### Achieve Economic wellbeing

- Children are broadening their horizons and becoming open to the wider range of employment opportunities, key skills and life chances. They become increasingly aware of the impact they have on other people and learn how to adapt their approach in order to work co-operatively in a wider range of group situations.

### Make a Positive Contribution

- Children develop their self-awareness and social skills, and appreciate the contributions and achievements of themselves and others.

## Outcomes

The Outdoor Education Advisors' Panel cites ten outcomes of high quality Outdoor Education. They are:

1. Enjoyment - children enjoy participating in outdoor activities and adopt a positive attitude to challenge and adventure.
2. Confidence - children gain personal confidence and self-esteem through taking on challenges and achieving success.
3. Social awareness - children develop their self awareness and social skills, and their appreciation of the contributions and achievements of themselves and others.
4. Environmental awareness - children become aware of the natural environment and understand the importance of conservation and sustainable development.
5. Activities and skills - children acquire and develop a range of skills in outdoor activities and exploration.
6. Personal qualities - children demonstrate increased initiative, self-reliance, responsibility, perseverance and commitment.
7. Key skills - children develop and extend their key skills of communication, problem solving leadership and teamwork.
8. Health and fitness - children learn to appreciate the benefits of physical fitness and the lifelong value of participation in healthy leisure activities.
9. Increased motivation and appetite for learning - children display an increased motivation and appetite for learning that contributes to raised levels of attainment in other aspects of their learning.
10. Broadened horizons - children broaden their horizons and become open to a wider range of employment opportunities and life chances.

( Ref. MCC Education Strategy for Outdoor Adventurous Activities 2010/2015)

## Method

The outdoor area will be resourced, maintained and available for the children to access on a daily basis. Children will be able to choose to use the outdoor area freely during free play and supported play sessions. Focus activities in small groups or 1-1 may be planned for outdoors at a fixed time of the day.

Structured sessions may include Eco School and Forest School type activities.

Children will need to have appropriate outdoor clothing for the weather in order to enable them to fully access the activities outside. This will include, but is not restricted to:

- Waterproof coat and/or leggings as appropriate
- Footwear appropriate for outdoor play
- Sun protection cream and a hat. Staff will ensure that parents have regular reminders.
- All weather suits and hats

The outdoor areas are appropriately staffed. Updated risk assessments are in place. Staff make observations to inform future planning when working with children in the outdoor area. Observations are used to inform assessment of each child, e.g. climbing, balance, use of equipment for instance bikes.

## Responsibilities:

### The school

- In topic book/newsletter reminder to parents of the need to be mindful of weather
- Offer shelter and appropriate clothing
- Have sun cream etc available
- Be mindful of individual needs
- Complete individual risk assessment as appropriate

### Home/Parents

- Permissions given
- Provide suitable clothing for weather
- Provide sun cream or permission to apply in school

### **Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's programme.