

ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL



ENCOURAGE
one another
AND BUILD EACH OTHER UP

↑ THESSALONIANS 5:11

Outdoor play policy for EYFS

September 2025

POLICY STATEMENT

The EYFS states:

'Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It gives children first-hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world. Outdoor environments offer children freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant.'

At St Paul's CE Primary School, we ensure that learning outdoors is given equal status as indoor learning and is planned for as an integral part of the play and learning provision for EYFS. Children have daily access to the outdoor environment for both continuous provision and focused activities. Wherever possible, inside and outside should complement one another, and learning in one area should reinforce learning in the other. Therefore, planning links to our themes and literacy and math's learning, extending skills by providing opportunities on a larger scale.

EYFS staff bear in mind the needs of all our children: girls, boys, different ethnic groups and children with disabilities to ensure inclusivity. We monitor and review the resources that are available, how they are set up and used to ensure that the Outside Area provides a rich Learning Environment that positively encourages Inclusive Education.

The outdoor learning environment is set up daily as a stimulating and inviting space, which supports learning across all areas of learning both Prime and Specific areas and to promote Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Due to the size of the outdoor space and to ensure effective adult interactions and supervision specific areas are set up. These alternate to meet curriculum needs.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

- Safeguarding and child protection
- PE
- Behaviour management
- Early Years Policy

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES:

Access all weathers

Additional resources boxes may be used to support learning in windy, wet and snowy conditions.

In wet /cold weather we will judge the merits of Outdoor Play on a day-to-day basis due to the nature of our external provision. If an area is waterlogged or icy it maybe

cordoned off to prevent the children getting too wet or the increased chances of injury. Climbing equipment is not to be used in icy and wet conditions.

Hot drinks should not be taken into the outside area.

Clothing

Children have wellies and waterproofs to allow access to outdoor play in significantly wet weather. Scarves to be worn under coats.

Sun cream and sun hats to be worn in hot weather as in line with the school policy.

Risk assessments.

Good risk management processes are in place, taking all reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children are kept to a minimum. This does not mean removing appropriate experiences that have high developmental benefit; it does mean finding ways for children to engage in them without undue risk of harm

Daily visual risk assessments are carried out by classroom staff before the start of the school day to ensure the area is safe, this includes checking equipment for damage and removing litter, animal mess, fungi. The member of staff will wear gloves to do this and waste is to be placed in a nappy bag, this and gloves are to be disposed of in the outdoor bins.

Resources and equipment that become unsuitable for good quality play will be removed by staff. Any issues are reported immediately to the teacher in charge and/or the site supervisor and any actions to be taken to be communicated with all staff and as necessary to the pupils.

The Health & Safety group (inc Governor) will include the EYFS outdoor area in their risk assessment walk and then report and respond to any risks identified. LCC to make premises checks which include outdoor play equipment.

The School's Insurance provision does not cover unsupervised siblings use of outside equipment (the child has not been taught how to use the equipment safely, or may have incorrect dress). No permission is given to siblings to play on outside equipment or for any child to play outside of school hours.

In the event of a fire or the fire alarm sounding children will stop what they are doing immediately. They will then line up at the fire assembly point with the rest of the class.

Role of Adults

A minimum of 1 member of staff need to always be outside. Students are additional help but are not included as qualified staff. If at any stage during the day there are many children outdoors, extra adult help can be called for and if most of the children are outside, more adults need to be outside, if possible (this should be determined by the lead professional in the unit).

Safety

Staff outdoors must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care, always be vigilant and never leave the area for any reason unless another member of staff has taken over responsibility.

Staff must be made aware of any medical needs of children outside.

If an accident occurs outdoors, the pupil will be treated, and forms completed outdoors as appropriate. Only in exceptional circumstances, if there is a serious accident (such as a fracture), should children be cared for outside. In the event of a serious accident more staff will obviously be needed outside.

Teaching and Learning

Many people associate the Role of the Adult outside in the external play area as being one of a supervisory nature only. Whilst obviously it is crucial that both the environment and the activities going on within it are safe, if this is the only focus for adults outside, many opportunities for learning and development will be missed. EYFS staff believe that the following are important if Outdoor Play is to be exciting, stimulating and rewarding for all concerned:

- EYFS staff need to be actively involved for play to be successful interacting and collaborating with the children, and where appropriate to support, stimulate and feed ideas to children.
- EYFS staff need to talk with children, to listen to them, and to challenge them.
- EYFS staff need to act as role models, to support children in developing skills, and, in some situations, to teach them new skills.
- EYFS staff also need to act as role models to challenge stereotypes, and to challenge gender confirming attitudes. Sometimes their simple presence and participation at an activity will help raise the status of the activity.
- EYFS staff need to be able to observe, to monitor and to evaluate individual children's progress, and the way that groups of children play together.
- Most importantly they need to be able to respond to what they see and find out in as productive a way as possible where changes might be needed, and act on these needs.
- EYFS staff need to be aware of situations which might be dangerous, and if not able to prevent accidents, to be able to respond to them.

Rules about use of sand:

- Sand must be dug out and not thrown.
- Damp down when drying out.
- Awareness of shade (heat from sand).
- Encourage children to keep sand in designated sand area.
- Children to help tidy the sand tray.
- Sweep sand around perimeter of sand tray after each session.
- Children will be asked to not use the sand pit - if play is inappropriate after explanation of safety rules.

Outdoor Water Play

- Water aprons to be worn.
- Water emptied at the end of each day - at home time to allow water to drain away and dry up.
- Staff need to be aware of the inherent danger of water play.
- Tyres to have drilled holes to allow for drainage

Track Bikes/scooters

- To be kept in designated 'zones'.
- Adult intervention to reduce speed/risk of collisions.
- Discourage bumping.
- Encourage correct use of bikes.
- Children should not carry toys/objects while riding on the scooters or bikes.
- Children should wear helmets on the bikes/scooters.
- Check clothes to ensure laces/pull cords are not in risk of catching in wheels.
- Children should not climb or ride the wheeled vehicles in long clothing, or while wearing dressing up clothes/shoes.
- Bikes/ Scooters to be lined up against the shed at tidy up time. Staff to remove from use, any bikes that fall into disrepair, notify administration staff.

Planted Areas

- Prickles, protruding / broken branches etc. to be removed by forest school leaders.
- Fungi to be removed with gloves and bagged before placing in the outdoor bin.
- Children finding mini beasts, digging, planting using natural resources to build with to wear gardening gloves and be reminded to wash hands after use.

Mud kitchen

- Children to use topsoil (as this is sterile).
- Any swept-up mud or sand be thrown away and not reused.
- Children to wash hands after use.

Climbing equipment

- Pupils must wear appropriate footwear that provides good traction between feet and climbing equipment.
- If staff feel that footwear is unsuitable they will use their discretion to restrict a child from a particular area of the playground or wooded area.
- Children not to wear gloves when climbing.
- Children to be taught to make sure there is no one in the area they plan to jump off. To leave a gap between themselves and others.
- Children must not sit or climb on top of objects that are used for activities e.g. benches/tables /mud kitchen.

Balls games and other small equipment

Where appropriate, to be put out without other toys/equipment being put out in the same area, so that space is available to practice skills.

Tidying

At the end of the session the area should be checked to avoid children being left outside unsupervised.


We believe that, as with inside, it is important for children to be involved in tidying up the Outside Area. We are aware however, that Health and Safety Outside is crucial, and that good organisation in tidying the Outdoor Area is essential. To ensure that 'tidying up time' is both safe and educational, children asked to stop what they are doing and listen for instructions on how to help tidy up. Children are not to carry heavy equipment.

Adults should work in pairs to lift heavy items. Items should be stored safely in the shelter. All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy removal next day.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy has been ratified by the Governing Body in October 2025.

This policy will be reviewed on or before the following date: September 2026 unless changes are required at an earlier date.



Article 31:
Every child has the right to play and rest safely.

