



# Caversham Preparatory School

## Policies and Procedures

### 253 EYFS Outdoor Learning Policy

## EYFS Outdoor Learning Policy

At Caversham Preparatory School, we believe that all children have the right to experience and enjoy the essential and special nature of being outdoors. Furthermore, children thrive and their minds and bodies develop best when they have access to stimulating outdoor environments for learning through play and real experiences.

### Aims

We believe that the outdoor environment is a rich, dynamic and natural space for learning and development in children of all ages. Its value as an essential learning resource has been recognised by many pieces of research and more recently within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), particularly within the principle of 'Enabling Environments'.

The outdoor environment is defined as the area outside of the classroom, an extension to the indoor provision. At Caversham Prep, this an area straight outside our classroom which we call the, 'Learning Garden' but we also have access to our sensory garden, school playground and grass area.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- The outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being, engagement and helps all aspects of children's development, including physical, emotional and social
- Playing, learning and exploring outdoors all offer opportunities for children (and adults) to engage, solve problems and do things in different ways
- The outdoors environments offer a chance to experience learning on a different scale in comparison to being indoors
- Being outdoors gives children first-hand, formative contact with the weather, seasons and the natural world.
- The outdoor environment is liberating and can offer children the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.
- The outdoor environment usually offers more freedom and space to move and inspires different movement from that indoors. This is vital for young children to develop their coordination, build muscle mass and experiment with moving their bodies.
- Every child has a right to daily outdoor learning and as much value should be placed on the outdoor environment as inside.

### Systems and Procedures

Within the EYFS document 'Effective Practice: Outdoor Learning', the key principles and systems of outdoor learning are outlined as follows:

- The outdoor environment has unique characteristics and features.
- Outdoor learning has equal value to indoor learning.
- Outdoor learning has a positive impact on children's well-being and development.
- Children need the support of attentive and engaged adults who are enthusiastic about the outdoors and understand the importance of outdoor learning.
- Outdoor learning is enhanced by an environment that is richly resourced with play materials that can be adapted and used in different ways.



## Caversham Preparatory School

### Policies and Procedures

#### 253 EYFS Outdoor Learning Policy

- An approach to outdoor learning that considers experiences rather than equipment places children at the centre of the provision being made.
- 'Children can learn to make decisions, solve problems and grow in confidence in their own abilities outdoors and they need plenty of time to investigate their outdoor environment purposefully. They will make predictions about what may happen based on their previous play experiences and test out these ideas and theories.' (EYFS Outdoors 2007)

The EYFS teachers at Caversham Prep School apply the above principles and procedures when planning outdoor learning activities for the children. Each school day we provide the children with equal indoor-outdoor access and freedom to choose outdoors if they wish, according to the principles of the EYFS framework.

Gross motor learning and physical activity are ongoing outside; however, an additional curricular provision is put in place. Each week, the learning indoors and outdoors is planned around our focus topics linked to a book and also through observation and assessment of children's interests and needs. This opportunity allows for children to master skills by applying them in a range of contexts and for staff to assess the children's understanding and mastery across the curriculum of specific knowledge and skills.

The planned activities using the outdoor area are specific to the outdoor – they are not activities that could just as well be done indoors. They are activities that take advantage of the outdoor learning environment. For example, when our focus text near Halloween is 'Room on the Broom', we enhance our mud kitchen area with petals and potions bottles so they can explore with a new context. When we want to focus on understanding of gravity and forces or check for understanding of this, we will specifically set up the guttering and stands and bring out items that can roll down (or not). Or when it is winter and we know it is going to freeze, we leave out the water tray and place items inside to if they freeze!

To ensure our children experience a breath of activities outdoors, we plan taking account of their interests and do encourage them to take risks and try something new. We get actively involved to engage the pupils to try the activities on offer as we would do indoors.

Teaching staff must ensure that assessment is ongoing and sharply focused on how well the children are mastering skills and knowledge.

### Roles & Responsibilities

Children need the support of attentive and engaged adults who are enthusiastic about the outdoors and understand the importance of outdoor learning. Young children need all of the adults around them to value and enjoy the outdoors themselves in order to feel safe and secure outside. Attitude, understanding and positive thinking is important, as well as skills to use the outdoor space to make the most of what the space has to offer. Adults are role models for children and need to display qualities that we would like young children to develop; enquiry, motivation, willingness to try and a positive attitude. The role of the adult outside should be much the same as the role of the adult inside; to scaffold learning, observe and record. Children should be encouraged to make their own choices and lead their own learning with appropriate support from an understanding adult. Through observation, adults should have a deep



## Caversham Preparatory School

### Policies and Procedures

#### 253 EYFS Outdoor Learning Policy

understanding of how individual children learn best, their interests and personal motivations and are therefore able to offer appropriate individualised support to them.

All staff are responsible for setting up and clearing away equipment and must all be aware of the children's safety. A security and safety check of the outdoor play area must be completed before children go outside.

Children are supervised at all times whilst outside and are in an enclosed area.

### Resources

Our varied resources aim to cover all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Curriculum. To maintain a high standard, these resources will be continually monitored and reviewed to ensure high quality, purposeful learning is available at all times.

### Inclusion

The outdoors curriculum of shared and physical activities is an important part of a child's overall development. We are committed to providing for each child, whatever their individual and/or special need, the opportunity to access all areas of the EYFS Curriculum. We adapt the facilities and learning opportunities whenever possible, to enable all children to use them.

### Health and Safety

All staff 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 during sessions outdoors but there is also a general risk assessment for the outdoor provision.

We look after our resources by covering certain resources overnight, so they do not get rained on or soiled by birds and trees. Items are wiped down regularly using Milton. Children always wash their hands before and after using the outdoor areas. Items are checked regularly for damage and thrown away and replaced when appropriate.

See EYFS Risk Assessment



## Caversham Preparatory School

### Policies and Procedures

#### 253 EYFS Outdoor Learning Policy

## Policy Administration

### Linked Policies

This policy also needs to be in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Early Years Foundation Stage
- PSCHE
- Outdoor Learning
- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding

### Quoted Legislation and Guidance

None

### Review Schedule

This policy is subject to 3 yearly reviews unless circumstances require an earlier review.

### Update and Review Log

Updated/ Reviewed By	Date	Notes
J Lawson	Jan 2019	Reviewed
Andrea Hutchison	23.1.21	Reviewed
A Lawson	Sep 2022	Formatting and Updating Links