

Caister on Sea Infant, Nursery School and Children's Centre

Outdoor Area Policy

INTRODUCTION

THIS DOCUMENT IS a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning outdoors at Caister on Sea Infant, Nursery School and Children's Centre.

IT WAS DEVELOPED through a process of consultation with teaching staff and governors.

THIS POLICY WILL be reviewed on a regular basis.

Person Responsible: Mrs Dexter and Mrs Stone

Legal Requirements

'Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults... Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.'

DfE Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (2014)

'Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.'

Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Early Education, 2012)

The Aims of our Outdoor Area

- To provide a stimulating, challenging, safe, secure environment for children to play and learn with enjoyment.
- To provide outdoor learning experiences which compliment and extend indoor provision and are stimulating and varied.
- To ensure children experience a broad and balanced curriculum, accessing all 7 Areas of Learning as outlined in Development Matters.
- To ensure learning outcomes are of equal importance to those taking place indoors and are planned to extend the children's learning.
- To provide space/areas to take part in energetic, noisy, large scale activities as well as opportunity for quieter, more reflective experiences.

- To plan for a balance between child initiated and adult directed activities.
- To incorporate the Characteristics of Effective Learning into all planned learning opportunities
- To ensure health and safety at all times e.g. area is supervised, daily risk assessment checks of the outdoor area, equipment is checked regularly, parents are kept informed of issues e.g. sun awareness, suitable clothing
- Make good use of outdoor space so that children are enabled to learn by working on a larger, more active scale than is possible indoors.

Teaching and Learning – The Outdoor Area

The outdoor environment should be

- Inviting and stimulating
- Safe
- Clean and tidy
- Carefully planned for
- Challenging and exciting
- Monitored and evaluated
- Maintained and replenished

The Foundation Stage staff are involved in the development of the outdoor area. Responsibility is shared for monitoring of equipment, provision of play equipment and the supervision of children at play. All staff understand that the outdoor area is an extension of the classroom and that any adult outside is involved in the children's play and development as they would inside.

Planning and Resources

The Foundation Stage teachers plan for the outdoor area. When planning outdoor learning adults consider the following points:

- The specific purpose of outdoor activities
- Individual and co-operative play
- Skills, knowledge, concepts and attitudes to be acquired/developed by the children
- Appropriate use of resources
- Staff interaction, guidance and support
- Balance/breadth of curriculum provision
- Alteration, addition or removal of resources
- Quality learning through play
- Allowing children to lead their learning by following their interests

Within the planning there should be flexibility to meet individual children's needs as they arise during the session. Resources should be available to enhance and extend their play.

Staff will make observations of children's learning and publish them on Tapestry to document their progress and allow parents and carers to share in their achievements.

Equipment used links to the seven areas of learning (Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding of the World, Physical development and Expressive Arts and Design). Foundation Stage teachers are responsible for setting up equipment each morning. At the end of the day Foundation Stage staff work with the children to ensure that equipment is put away and stored appropriately ready for the next day. All staff and children are responsible for the upkeep of the outdoor area, e.g. sand swept up, resources stored in their correct place in the sheds, and rubbish put in the bin.

The Outdoor area will be resourced and available for the children to access on a daily basis. Children will be able to choose to use the outdoor area during 'independent learning.'

The role of the adult outside

Adults should be actively involved with children in their outdoor learning.

Adults should be:

- Talking to the children in a variety of ways (conversing, discussing, questioning, modelling and commentating)
- Helping children to find solutions to problems
- Supporting and encouraging
- Extending their activities
- Initiating learning opportunities and activities
- Joining in with activities where appropriate
- Observing, assessing and recording
- Celebrating children's successes
- Being aware of safety issues
- Being aware of every child's equal right of access to a full outdoor curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated regardless of race, culture, religion, gender or disability
- Evaluating observations in order to plan appropriate resources and experiences

In these ways adults are making positive contributions to the children's play and setting up challenging situations for children to experience.

Equal opportunities and inclusion (including SEN and Gifted and Talented)

Caister on Sea Infant, Nursery school and Children's Centre treat all children with equal respect as individuals regardless of age, gender, ability, religion and race. We are aware that each individual child has his/her own needs and we aim to meet them in an inclusive

way. The outdoor area is planned to provide learning opportunities for all abilities. We ensure all children have provision suited to their needs.

Safety in the outdoor area

All staff are involved in the monitoring of the equipment outside. Staff report any broken equipment or damage to the outside area to the caretaker. All staff are involved in the upkeep of the outdoor area. We ensure the outdoor area is clean and tidy every morning before it is set up for the children and a daily risk assessment is carried out before the children arrive. Adults will never leave the outdoor area unsupervised. It is important for staff to move around the outdoor area so that different areas are adequately supervised. Parents and students helping outside should never be left on their own to supervise the children. Whenever children carry equipment (clearing away) they should be taught how to do this safely.

Safeguarding:

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Date agreed by staff: 26.05.16