

**Lingdale Primary School
and
Lingdale Primary School Two Year Old Provision**

Outdoor Play Policy

“When children play out of doors, they are exercising their growing intellectual and emotional muscles, as well as their physical ones. They are developing the power to think, to feel, to do, to see and understand, to represent and express. They are imagining, puzzling, wondering, exploring, befriending and sharing”.

“Can I: Play Out” Outdoor Play in the Early Years – Bradford LEA 1995

Outdoor play is essential for all aspects of a child’s development. It provides children with experiences which enable them to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically. In doing so it provides a rich context for the development of their language and encourages positive attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle.

“The outdoor space must be viewed as an essential teaching and learning environment which is linked with the learning that goes on inside, but with even greater status because it allows for children to learn through movement.”

*‘Exercising muscles and minds - Outdoor play and the early years curriculum’,
Marjorie Ouvry, The National Early Years Network, 2000.*

The aim of both indoor and outdoor play is to provide a stimulating environment for children’s learning in all areas of the EYFS curriculum. Close observation is essential in order to assess children’s ability and to ensure appropriate planning and continuity for the outdoor curriculum.

The provision and planning for outdoor play, just as indoor play, must reflect the diversity and richness of the experience and developing interests of the children.

The outdoor environment

Being outdoors has a positive impact on children’s sense of well-being and promotes development in all aspects of children’s growth.

Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales.

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.

The Outdoor Area

The outdoor area is well laid out and provides for:

- Challenging and exciting play
- Safety
- Different levels of play - flat, hilly, sloping

- Grassed and hard areas (including straight and winding paths) should be wide enough for safe, easy play with a safety surface area for climbing equipment
- Shady areas
- Growing/digging areas - garden soil, compost, tubs, vegetable and flower beds. A free digging area is easily provided so that children can enjoy the physical satisfaction of digging; also to provide opportunities for finding mini-beasts, planting tubs and garden for different seasons, sowing seeds, harvesting vegetables providing opportunities for environmental science, caring and responsibility
- Wild areas - long grass, wild flowers and trees, logs and shrubs to attract insects
- A sandpit with hard surround to provide sitting areas and to facilitate easy sweeping;
- also a sturdy cover protection

Quiet, reflective areas and busy, moving play areas:

- Developing exploration and imagination
- Providing opportunities for large scale experiences

Planning Outdoor Play

Staff must consider the following points:

- The specific purpose of the outdoor play
- Individual, co-operative and parallel 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 play

To ensure balance and breadth of provision, adults planning an outdoor activity need to think carefully about what it should include and why. They need to have clear goals for children's learning, at the same time they need to be responsive to children's enthusiasm and 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 notes of children's' achievements (through observation) to record on individual E-Profiles.

Learning Opportunities in the Outdoor Area

At Lingdale Primary School and Lingdale Primary School Two Year Old Provision we believe that:

- Outdoor play is central to young children's learning.
- Indoors and outdoors is viewed as one combined and integrated environment.
- Outdoors is both a teaching and learning environment, where adults interact with
- children to extend their knowledge, skills and concepts.
- Outdoor design and layout is given careful consideration.
- The outdoor classroom offers children the opportunity to use effective styles of
- learning – playing, movement and sensory experience.
- Children are given a wide range of open-ended equipment and environments.
- Children are able to control, change and modify their environment.

Each of the Early Years Foundation Stage learning areas are developed through Outdoor Play.

1. Developing Personal, Social and Emotional Learning Through Outdoor Play

- The resources and experiences outside provide opportunities for children to develop co-operation and build relationships.
- Children are encouraged to work together, take turns and help each other.
- Children are encouraged to take responsibility for the resources in the outside area. They are able to set up the areas and tidy resources away.
- The organisation and management of outdoors supports children in initiating and developing their own ideas and interests.
- Children are encouraged to develop a sense of wonder about living things and natural phenomena.
- Children develop their understanding and show respect for living things.
- The resources and experiences outside provide opportunities for children to act out their feelings.

2. Developing Communication, Language and Literacy Through Outdoor Play

- There is a good range of stimulating first-hand experiences for children and adults to talk about.
- There are places for children to talk with each other.
- Reading and writing are incorporated into activities and experiences. They are relevant and meaningful to children's interests and patterns of learning.
- Children are encouraged to use the written word or write for a range of purposes,
e.g. signs, messages, tickets.
- Non-fiction books are a stimulus for investigations outdoors.

- Stories are told/read/re-enacted outside.
- Children are encouraged to express their ideas, interests through role play.

3. Developing Mathematical Learning Through Outdoor Play

- Children are encouraged to explore patterns, shape, measurement and numbers
- in the natural and made world. There are resources to support this range of learning.
- The available resources enable children to solve mathematical problems.
- Staff encourage children to develop and use their mathematical language.
- The range of equipment enables children to work on a large scale.
- Children are encouraged to play mathematical games with large equipment.
- Numbers are incorporated into children's play.
- Children are encouraged to write numbers or record mathematical ideas in relevant and appropriate ways.

4. Developing Learning About and Understanding the World Through Outdoor Play

- Children are encouraged to observe and express their ideas about similarities and differences in the natural world.
- Children are encouraged to explore the physical environment and are able to solve problems in their own way.
- Changes in the weather are used to stimulate investigative work.
- There is a good range of natural and made materials for children and adults to talk about.
- There is a sufficient range of resources to develop children's interest in movement.
- Children are able to use a range of natural and made materials to design, make and build.
- The outside area is organised so that children are provided with opportunities to play out their life experiences and to develop imaginative play.
- Staff support and develop children's imaginative play related to life experiences.
- Staff ensure that all children have access to a wide range of resources and experiences.

5. Developing Physical Development Through Outdoor Play

- The planning of equipment in the outdoor classroom takes into account all stages of children's physical development.
- There is a good range of equipment to develop children's co-ordination and control skills.
- The resources and equipment encourage a variety of ways of using the body.

- The children are presented with challenges that enable them to discover what they are able to do whilst learning about the limitations of their bodies.
- Children are able to experience a variety of different sized materials and use them in a variety of ways.
- Children are encouraged to use their bodies imaginatively e.g. dance, music and movement.
- Staff ensure that boys and girls have equal access to all areas of physical learning.

6. Developing Expressive Arts and Design Learning Through Outdoor Play

- Children are encouraged to represent their ideas imaginatively. There are a range of materials so that they can create 2D and 3D images.
- Children are encouraged to explore colour, shape and texture within natural materials.
- Staff plan for music, movement, dance, singing and drama to take place in the outside area.
- Children have the opportunity to experience a large range of textures and different materials.
- Opportunities are provided for children to develop large-scale work.
- Appropriate resources are available to support large-scale mark making.

The Role of the Adult Outdoors

Adults should be actively involved with children in their games and activities where appropriate and should not be solely in a supervisory role.

Adults should be:

- Talking with children in a variety of ways (conversing, discussing, questioning, modelling and commentating)
- Helping children to find solutions to problems
- Supporting, encouraging
- Extending their activities by making extra resources available and providing new ideas
- Initiating games and activities
- Joining in games and activities when invited by children
- Observing, assessing and recording
- 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
- Providing role models for appropriate clothing i.e. hats, coats, boots to suit weather conditions

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

Recording and Assessment

Records of the children's development and progress when outside are made following observations and assessments. These observations are then recorded in the E Profile.

Assessments of the children's experiences of the outdoor area are shared with parents through each child's Learning Journal.

Review and Monitoring

The Outdoor Play Policy will be reviewed annually alongside the EYFS Curriculum Policy