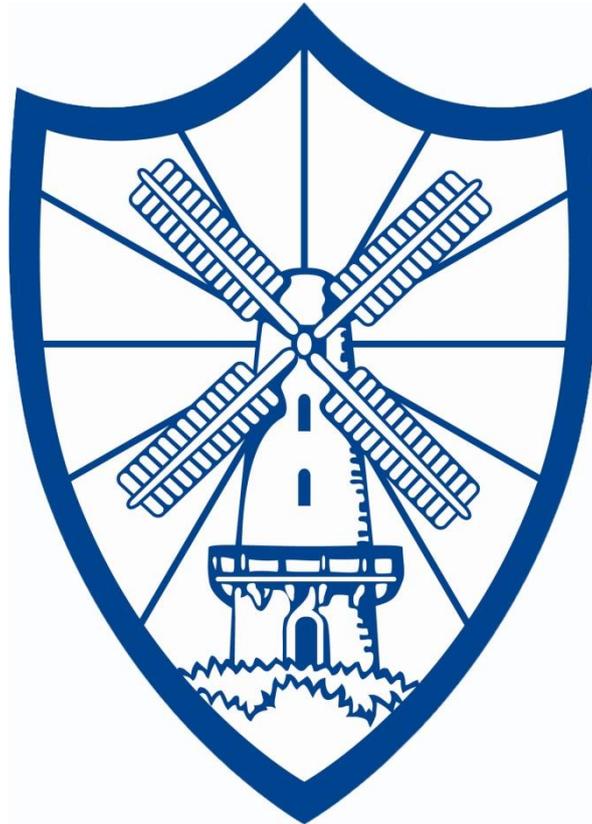




Meopham Community Academy



Foundation Stage Outdoor Learning Policy

This policy was reviewed by: Katherine Heasman (Assistant Headteacher for Early Years and Key Stage 1) and Rebecca Recardo (Early Years Leader)
Date: May 2018
Approved by Governors:
Next Review Date: May 2020

Rationale

'The more closely we consider the elaborate interplay of brain and body, the more clearly one theme emerges: movement is essential to learning'

Carla Hannaford

It is important for young children to have opportunities provided, that allow them to explore and interact with the environment in a physical way. QCA guidance stresses the importance of providing a learning environment, which includes both indoor and outdoor areas.

Aims of Outdoor Play

- To increase aerobic movement which will increase oxygen supply to the brain.
- To increase movement which reduces stress and inhibits learning.
- To increase cross lateral movements, helping with learning by connecting both hemispheres of the brain, strengthening neural pathways.
- To offer opportunities for different types of play, sometimes boisterous, sometimes quieter and reflective
- To offer opportunities for children to develop in all areas of learning
- To offer opportunities of collaborative communication and learning
- To provide safe, different and challenging environments in which the children can learn
- To offer imaginative opportunities where children can manipulate natural resources within their play

Organisation

- A flexible staff rota is established, providing opportunity for all staff to use the outdoor area during Exploring and Learning.
- The outdoor area needs to be supervised by a member of staff, although parents and students can support learning in the outdoor area under the direction of a staff member
- Staff timetabled to work in the outdoor area has overall responsibility for resourcing and clearing away for each session although a team approach where possible is preferable
- All staff need to be active in evaluating use of the outdoor area on a daily basis
- Visits to alternative outdoor environments such the school grounds should be planned for regularly (at least once a month)

Planning

The outdoor area is an extension of the indoor work areas and this needs to be reflected in the planning (see appendix). All adults need to be aware of the areas of learning that have been planned for, but need to be mindful of other learning opportunities that may arise. The children's own interests need to be integrated into planning for the use of the outdoor play area.

Assessment

Observations and assessments are made in the outdoor work area to inform further planning and as evidence of learning, which will be used to complete the Foundation Stage Profile. The profile ensures that each child leaves the Foundation Stage with their strengths acknowledged and next steps for learning identified.

Rules for Use of the Outdoor Environment

Rules need to be negotiated between children and staff at the onset of each academic year. In agreeing a set of outdoor rules for the children staff need to bear in mind the following:

- Children should work within the agreed boundaries, and moving beyond only when supervised by an adult
- Activities involving 'physical development' should be restricted to the red safety area. These include: trikes, bikes and scooters, balancing, climbing equipment
- Staff need to consider choice of equipment and amount of equipment which may be available in any one session, ensuring use of one does not conflict with the safe use of another
- Other activities need to be available on the paved areas
- Children should be encouraged to be independent in terms of accessing equipment and clearing away. Appropriate supervision is required for some equipment or when children are on the bank or steps
- Other rules regarding behaviour apply to learning in the outdoor environment

When negotiating rules with children it is important to phrase rules to direct children into knowing what 'to' do and not what 'not' to do

The Role of the Adult

The role of the adult is important in

- Planning and resourcing a challenging environment
- Supporting children's learning in planned activities and in spontaneous play
- Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play
- Observe children, using observations to inform further planning for the outdoor environment, sometimes planning from the children's interests
- Ensure children are safe in the extended outdoor environment (school grounds) helping them to make own assessments of safety.