

### Learning Out of Doors in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One Policy

*The outdoors can provide a scale and freedom for a type of play that is difficult to replicate indoors.*

*Curriculum Framework for Children 3 to 5*

*Outdoor learning makes a major contribution to children's development. Young children will be missing out on important learning opportunities if quality outdoor provision is not available to them regularly.*

*The Great Outdoors by Margaret Edgington*

#### Our Vision

To provide a rich and varied learning community where all children reach their potential through self-esteem and self-belief and a commitment to life-long learning.

#### Rationale

##### *Why is Outdoor Play Important?*

- ❖ Children **enjoy** being outdoors
- ❖ Outdoors gives some children a greater sense of **freedom**
- ❖ There is **more space** outdoors to play and activities can be a **larger scale**
- ❖ A child's **physical development** is linked to their **mental development**
- ❖ Children can be messier and make more **noise**
- ❖ The outdoors allows children to be more **energetic**
- ❖ Playing in the outdoors suit some children's **learning/play styles**
- ❖ Outdoors promotes **healthy** activities and fresh air
- ❖ Gives opportunities to **socialise** and **communicate**
- ❖ Provides **practical hands-on** activities and '**real experiences**'
- ❖ Greater **understanding and care** for the environment and others

## Our Aims

To create an outdoor area that is stimulating, exciting and used throughout the year as a learning environment.

We aim to:

- use the outdoor environment as a context and a natural resource for learning
- include the outdoor area when planning for learning
- enable children to access the outdoor area on a daily basis
- ensure that the outdoor area offers children the opportunity to investigate and explore, problem solve, use their imagination and creativity
- ensure that the outdoors offers children opportunities to develop their gross motor skills
- ensure that children enjoy energetic activity outdoors and the feeling of well-being that it brings
- observe and assess and record the learning that happens in the outdoor area
- help children to care for the outside environment
- enable children to work on their own and with others
- enable children to develop an appreciation of natural beauty and a sense of wonder about the world
- respect the outdoor environment and to care for living things
- enable children to manage and use the space and freedom afforded by the outdoor area
- give children the opportunity to relax, enjoy and have fun outdoors
- to use tools and equipment safely and effectively

## **How Outdoor Learning relates to specific areas of Learning and Development**

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

The outdoors is a place that children of all ages can get pleasure from being in and can act on their strong impulse to investigate. They can be curious, inventive, and interested. They can concentrate and persevere at activities they have chosen. This in turn supports the development of positive attitudes towards new opportunities, challenges and responsibilities.

The unique and special nature of the outdoors brings opportunities to experience beauty, joy, wonder and exuberance into children's everyday

lives. Gardening, in containers or other spaces, and growing activities outdoors, as well as seasonal maintenance tasks, such as weeding or sweeping leaves, provide valuable ways for children to develop care and concern for living things and their immediate environment.

Outdoors can provide a safe supervised place for children to explore new challenges, learn to manage risk and to cope with change and adversity. Social relationships can be developed in a space that offers scope for communication through action, movement and language. Shared enterprises can be undertaken and emerging problems can be discussed and resolved. Negotiating for equipment or turns offers children situations where they can learn to consider the needs of others.

Outdoors supports children's confidence, self-esteem and developing independence as they make choices and select resources. It also offers meaningful opportunities for personal independence as children learn to manage themselves in a different environment and in the putting on and taking off of outdoor clothes.

### **Communication, Language and Literacy**

Outdoors, children can hear and respond to a different range of sounds, beginning to recognise and distinguish between noises in the outdoor environment. They can use action and movement alongside words and sounds to convey their ideas and meanings. The outdoors is a place where stories, songs and poems can be shared and enacted.

Mark-making opportunities outdoors can every bit as valuable as those that are planned indoors; babies and toddlers will enjoy making handprints in damp sand, while older children can set a trail of sticks round the outdoor area leading to their den.

The outdoors offers children exciting opportunities for developing upper body and limb strength through physical activity and movement. These experiences will have a positive impact on the development of control and coordination of small muscles needed later for successful handwriting.

### **Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy**

Children can enjoy number rhymes and act out number games outdoors. Their awareness of counting and the significance of numbers can be demonstrated there too, as they count how many beans have grown on the beanstalk and work out whether there are enough for everyone to try one.

Natural materials that are found outdoors, such as twigs, conkers, chestnuts and pebbles can be sorted and graded according to size or shape. Imaginative games offer meaningful opportunities for children to learn to correspond objects, for example, giving each teddy a leaf plate and conker cake for an outdoor picnic.

The outdoors is a place where children are able to explore and develop understanding of mathematical language and concepts in real life situations, for example, deciding how many more umbrellas or Wellington boots are needed if another two children want to go out on a rainy day. Perceptions and theories about shape, space and measure can be tried and tested as babies crawl between bushes, toddlers fill buckets with stones, or older children create patterns with fir cones.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

The outdoors is a place where children of all ages can explore and investigate a wide range of materials that cannot be found indoors. Babies and toddlers can have first-hand experience of nature through touching plants, smelling flowers, crawling on earth, and watching the movements of insects, spiders or beetles. Older children can note and record patterns in the natural and made environment, for example, through photographing leaves, or brickwork.

The impact of wind, weather and seasons can be experienced directly and the effect on the environment noted. The cycle of plant growth and the seasonal changes outdoors give children context and meaning to the concept of time.

Outdoors, all children can satisfy their curiosity in how things work through practical investigations, for example, what happens when a tower of logs falls down, or why balls only roll downhill. They can work out how materials can be joined to achieve a pre-planned purpose, for example, creating a structure on which they can balance.

The outdoors offers a meaningful context for using simple ICT, for example a walkie-talkie to contact a friend hidden in the den, or a camera to photograph a spider's web, or a pattern of stones and leaves. Use of the outdoors widens children's sense of place as they move between indoors and outdoors, watch passing people or cars, and note the features of their immediate and wider environment.

The outdoors is a place for developing children's awareness of themselves and the important people in their lives, and for affirming and reflecting the events and traditions that contribute to children's growing awareness of their culture and society.

### **Physical Development**

Outdoors children can be physically active on a scale that is less possible indoors. This offers babies and toddlers exciting opportunities for purposeful movement over large areas, exploration of different levels, negotiation along pathways and around objects, and changes in direction and speed. As children progress in their own learning journey the introduction of further challenges will ensure their existing skills can be expanded.

Outdoors is a place where children can experience the effect of physical activity on their bodies, as their hearts beat faster and they breathe more deeply after vigorous movement such as running, speeding along on a wheeled vehicle or pushing themselves along the floor. They can experience the reverse effect as they lie quietly on a rug outdoors.

The outdoors supports children's developing awareness of personal health and safety. They can begin to understand how to maintain personal health and safety, for example through 'sun safe' routines in hot weather, and hygiene routines after handling earth. The outdoors is a place where children can develop control and dexterity with tools and small equipment, for example, through digging and gardening, or using bats and balls, hammers and nails, and sand play equipment.

### **Creative Development**

The outdoors is full of creative opportunities and is rich with sensory stimuli. Children can explore and respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, feel, touch and smell. Through language and music, dance and movement, art and role-play props they can express and communicate their ideas and feelings.

Outdoors, children can experiment with materials and repeat patterns of play. They can apply existing knowledge to new situations and become questioning and inventive thinkers. They can explore different materials in two and three dimensions, and begin to make connections and see the relationships between events and objects.

Provision of resources such as pans, ladles and colanders strung safely on a line and spoons to bang against them offer opportunities for creating sounds and rhythms while a box containing role-play materials allows opportunities for making a traditional story such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' come to life. Netting fixed to a fence can become a weaving frame bigger than the child, encouraging weaving and threading movements.

### **Policy into Practice**

Possibilities for outdoor learning will be considered throughout our planning, using it as a context and a natural resource for learning.

We will:

- facilitate access to the outdoor area on a daily basis through discussion and staff meetings, planning and mutual agreement
- organise and provide necessary resources as appropriate, e.g. footwear, tools etc
- encourage children to use a variety of natural resources

### **Health and Safety**

We will 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. Teachers will assess risks of outdoor learning opportunities. Risk assessments will be carried out where appropriate and the school's Health and Safety Policy will be followed.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This will include:

- staff observations, discussions and feedback from children and parents
- discuss and review the validity of the policy to ensure it is meeting the needs of the children

# **Grewelthorpe & Fountains CE Primary Schools Federation**

<b>Policy:</b>	<b>Learning Out of Doors in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One Policy</b>
<b>Signed Chair of Governors:</b>	<b>R Bain</b>
<b>Date Signed:</b>	<b>Feb 24</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>Spring 25</b>
<b>Review schedule</b>	<b>Annually</b>