



Downe Primary School

Outdoor Learning Policy

Revised: November 2023

To be Reviewed: November 2026

School Vision

At Downe Primary School we are committed to inspiring and challenging every child to achieve their full potential by providing a safe, stimulating and inclusive environment. We will actively encourage our children to take learning risks, develop their independence and resilience, and nurture their thirst for lifelong learning.

Inspirational teaching - aspirational learners

Aims

- Use the outdoor space as a natural resource for learning
- To utilise the outdoor space for large scale work such as construction and mark making
- Include the outdoor area when planning for continuous provision
- Include children when planning for learning outdoors
- Provide the opportunity for all children including those with special needs/disabilities 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 the outdoors offers children the opportunity to develop their physical skills including mark making
- Develop children's understanding of the world through practical learning
- Give children the opportunity to work independently or with peers or adults
- Teach the children to use tools safely and appropriately
- Ensure that children are challenged and learning is extended

We will ensure:

- Health and Safety checks are carried out daily.
- A risk assessment for 'checking the grounds' is completed regularly.
- That rules for safety and behaviour management are known to all staff and children
- That there is a first aider available and an adequate first-aid kit to hand in the case of an accident
- Staff are aware of weather factors that affect health and safety

- At all times, staff/child ratios (both inside and outside) should be maintained within Ofsted guidance. A risk assessment should be undertaken and a contingency plan developed to ensure children's safety should ratio's change in the event of unforeseen incidents.

We believe that *'there is no inappropriate weather only inappropriate clothes'* therefore, we will aim to be outside come rain or shine. All children and adults will need to be protected from extremes of weather. In hot weather this means providing shady areas; in cold and wet weather a shelter is needed from the wind or rain. We will work with parents to ensure that all children are suitably equipped to participate in outdoor learning.

Guidance on clothing and protection

- In strong sun we will ensure that all children wear hats, have high factor sun cream and are aware of the importance of drinking water
- In wet weather children will wear wellington boots and waterproofs
- In cold conditions children will wear coats, hats and gloves.

Planning

Planning incorporates a balance between adult and child-initiated activities and experiences taking account of children's interests and experiences. Individual and group planning incorporates all areas of learning and development and puts the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage into practice.

Outcomes for children

Outdoor learning helps to ensure that children are successful learners enabling children to develop knowledge and skills in ways that add value to their everyday learning experiences. The outdoor learning environment compliments the indoors. It allows for children to participate in larger scale learning and helps to develop core physical skills which impact on their development across many areas of learning. Research shows that outdoor learning environment has much to offer and has an impact on children's behaviour and self - esteem.

- Contributes towards the promotion and children's understanding of the importance of developing a Healthy lifestyle
- Outdoor learning has a positive impact upon children's personal and social development
- Outdoor learning impacts positively on children's attitudes such as independence, confidence
- It allows children to explore and experience nature and encourages children to care for their environment
- It fosters team work, perseverance and control
- Outdoor learning provides positive opportunities for active learning, the outside environment can promote skills of enquiry, problem solving, communication, and questioning.
- There is clear evidence that boys in particular are more active in their learning in an outdoor environment.
- Co-operation, creativity and evaluation effectiveness and coping strategies
- Outdoor learning develops knowledge and skills in ways that add value to learners' everyday experiences in the classroom.

It is the responsibility of all the staff to follow this policy and to ensure the safety of the children.