

Policy for Outdoor Provision:

Values & Aims & Equality:

At Ashton Vale Pre-School, we seek to encourage a positive attitude to the outdoors and enrich children's understanding of the world around them, we also appreciate that outdoor learning has equal value to indoor learning. Active learning experiences outdoors are essential for young children. They give children opportunities to practise their developing skills, to explore the world and make them feel good; it is also important for children's physical, mental and emotional development. We believe that children should begin to take risks and face challenges outdoors.

We aim:

- To promote a safe, stimulating, purposeful and happy atmosphere where children can experience joy and excitement in the outdoors;
- To foster positive, caring attitudes among all those involved in learning outdoors;
- To provide access to a variety of different spaces in order to nurture mind-body growth;
- To plan for and provide high quality outdoor play activities for children of all abilities, including SEND, in which they can acquire new skills and discover new experiences;
- To enhance the development of motor skills (gross and fine);
- To develop co-ordination, balance and body awareness;
- To provide the opportunity for assessed risky freedom, where children can play and socialise freely and using imagination and initiative;
- To enhance children's long term social, emotional and cognitive development through learning outdoors;
- To provide opportunities for all children to access outdoor space, recognising that some cannot access space safely at home;
- To raise children's self-esteem and self-confidence through exploration of outdoor environment.

As part of our daily routine all children will have the opportunity to explore the nursery's large outdoor learning environment and will participate in planned/free choice learning activities regardless of the weather.

Benefit of Outdoor Play:

Outdoor play is a vital part of children's development and through playing outside children can develop greater physical, social, sensory, language, mathematical and scientific skills. Outdoor play encourages:

- **An Active Lifestyle**

Children who learn to play outdoors are much more likely to continue to enjoy outdoor activities such as walking, running and cycling as they get older. Given the number of gadgets and new technology available to us all, outdoor play is an extremely important factor in combatting an increasingly sedentary lifestyle.

- **An Appreciation of Nature and the Environment**

Learning in an outdoor environment allows children to interact with the elements around us and helps them to gain an understanding of the world we live in. Children can experience animals in their surroundings (e.g. minibeasts, birds) and also learn about their habitats and lifecycles within our setting (e.g. chicks, caterpillars).

- **Developing Social Skills**

Indoor spaces can often feel overcrowded to children and naturally, they may feel intimidated in this type of environment. More space outdoors can help children to join in and 'come out of their shells'. Giving children outdoor learning experiences offers them a chance to talk about what they have done with their friends, teachers and parents.

- **Independence**

The extra space offered by being outdoors will give children the sense of freedom to make discoveries by themselves. They can develop their own ideas or create games and activities to take part in with their friends without feeling like they're being directly supervised. They'll begin to understand what they can do by themselves and develop a 'can do' attitude, which will act as a solid foundation for future learning.

- **An Understanding of Risk**

Being outdoors provides children with more opportunities to experience risk-taking. They have the chance to take part in tasks on a much bigger scale and complete them in ways they might not when they're indoors. They can learn to

make calculated decisions such as 'should I jump off this?' or 'can I climb the boat?'. Children need to know what they are confident to do and what they need help with so they do not put themselves in unnecessary danger.

Practitioner expectations:

The role of the adult in children's learning outside will be to:

- Risk assess the outdoor space and all activities before allowing children to participate in any play.
- Supervise children at all times in all areas of the garden including when children use the climbing frame.
- Interact with the children and model how to keep safe in the garden and how to safely use equipment.
- Set up the outdoor learning space with a range of activities, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance.
- Answer children's questions and develop children's knowledge of the outside environment and the natural world they live in, and when needed, use the Characteristics of Effective Learning to 'find out'
- Encourage all children to help tidy up and develop respect for their outdoor space.
- Ensure all children are kept safe in the sun and other adverse weather conditions.
- Risk assess the outdoor space at the end of the day.

Practitioners will be expected to: make provision for young children to be active and interactive, and to improve their skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. Children will be supported by practitioners to use all their senses to learn about the world in which they live, and to make connections between new information and what they already know. Practitioners will help children to develop an understanding of the importance of physical activity, effects of exercise and making healthy choices about their bodies; and children will grow in confidence and be able to manage risks in their play.

At all times children will be supervised by qualified practitioners. Outdoor ratios need to be adequate at all times, there is flexibility for times when children require nappy changes/toileting and practitioners will be mindful towards others leaving the garden (1:8 for 3+ and 1:4 for 2-year olds). Adults must make health/safety issues a priority when outside and remain vigilant. Practitioners will interact with children to help develop all areas of Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Before and after sessions, parents are responsible for the supervision of their children.

Using resources in imaginative play: We encourage resources to be used for their purpose, but we value that sometimes children will change their use. Imaginative play will be supported providing that it does not pose a risk to others (emotionally or physically). We will monitor and discuss risk taking and resource play with the children and regularly promote positive behaviour.

Safety

All practitioners will make a judgement on the weather/suitability for climbing. A daily risk assessment check to be completed by practitioners and signed off on the check sheet. Any actions to be taken to be communicated with all practitioners and where necessary to the children. Children are not allowed in the shed, practitioners can move resources to the ground area away from the shed entrance and ask children to distribute where possible. Shed doors to remain closed with padlock closed to prevent access, when children are playing outside. The electronic gate will be turned 'off' after drop off until pick up; when practitioners use the gate entrance, they will turn the gate key off once children are inside the garden.

We agree that as a team we are all responsible for setting up and clearing away equipment. We must all be aware of the children's safety, not just within our key groups. A risk assessment check of the outdoor play area must be completed before children go out. This will be performed before the children come into the setting and continue throughout the day by the practitioners using the garden.

At the end of each session, practitioners will ensure that all children are lined up at the gate and counted before they enter the building. This applies too, if practitioners use the electronic gate.

Maintenance & storage: All equipment will be stored in designated outdoor sheds or areas; the toys and equipment will be monitored and risk assessed to ensure that no parts are missing or broken. All practitioners are responsible for equipment; if equipment is found to be in an unsafe condition it will be removed from further use and reported to Hayley.

Planted Areas: Planters to be checked and maintained ensuring safety; prickles to be removed when found and all practitioners are responsible for gardening and planting.

Planning for Outdoors:

We will include outdoor play in our regular planning ensuring that we offer a wide range of learning experiences as part of the EYFS. We will encourage running, jumping and climbing and balancing on appropriate equipment in order to aid and promote physical development and good co-ordination. Such activities will also make children aware of the space around them and will encourage them to use space appropriately.

Activities planned for outdoor play and education will include planting and gardening, discussion of growing and living things, animals and birds that use our garden. The seasons and weather will be incorporated and observed through outdoor play and there will be time for reflective and quiet play.

Adults planning an activity will think carefully about what it should include and why. They will 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 will be flexibility to meet individual needs as they arise during the session.

Transferring resources: We agree that indoor activities can be transferred to the outdoor play area by a practitioner, a condition of this will be that 'indoor resources' have to be returned at the end of the session. If a practitioner agrees to use the same resource as a previous session, it is the responsibility of the last practitioner to use it, to put away. Breaching these rules will result in no resources to be taken from inside to outside. These will include arts and crafts and current Early Years topics, where appropriate.

The Summerhouse: Throughout the year, the Summerhouse will be transformed into a different area of role-play, e.g. café, garage/mechanics, market/fruit and veg shop, garden centre. The Summerhouse will **not** be used during whole group playtime, only with key groups to ensure appropriate supervision and extension of learning opportunities.

Outdoors Golden Rules:

Each year group will set their own Golden Rules with their key children for outside play and children will be made aware of the expectations placed on them. There will be overarching rules that all children and practitioners will follow:

- Respect and listen to each other (children and practitioners)
- Use kind hands, feet and voices
- Line up when asked
- Only use the 'top garden' with an adult; gravel will not be thrown in to plants
- If someone is hurt, please tell an adult

Sand, water and bike/scooter play also have specific rules that all practitioners should enforce.

Rules for use of sand:

- Sand kept in storage box & replaced at the end of use. Sand is not to be 'left out' all day.
- Sand is dug out, not thrown
- Damp down when drying out
- Teach an awareness of shade (heat from sand)
- Encourage children to keep sand in designated sand area
- Children to help tidy the sand pit
- Sweep sand around perimeter of sand area after each session
- Children will be asked to come out of the sand area if play is inappropriate after explanation of safety rules.

Rules for use of water play:

- Water aprons to be worn when agreed
- Water emptied at the end of session – water is not to be 'left out' all day
- Practitioners need to be aware of the inherent danger of water play
- Water is **not** purposely poured on others.

Rules for use of bikes and scooters:

- Children are **not allowed** to use their own or other's scooters and bikes from home – teach respect and value of another person's property
- Bikes/scooters kept in 'black' area of playground, **not by the boat or bridge/rainbow den**
- Adult intervention to reduce speed/risk of collisions
- Discourage bumping – use brakes to stop not feet or outdoor equipment.
- Encourage correct use of bikes
- Clothes - laces/pull cords risk of catching in wheels.
- Children to line bikes/scooters up against the shed at tidy up time, for an adult to then put away before lining up at the gate
- Practitioners to remove from use, any bikes that fall into disrepair, notify Hayley.

Behaviour/specific strategy plans:

We need our children to behave so that they can learn in a calm, safe environment, and so that we can teach them effectively. But helping children learn to behave properly is also a vital life skill. We want our children to behave well in their wider lives, as well as in our settings. And for this to happen, we need more than systems to control behaviour – we must help children understand the why behind what we ask them to do. We must help children develop the empathy that's at the heart of 'good behaviour'.

In all instances:

1. React calmly, talk to child – at child's level (reflect – how do other children feel if we hurt them/say unkind things etc.), praise good behaviour, remind children regularly about golden rules.
2. Make sure that our approach is fair and consistent. Each practitioner will manage behaviour in the same way.
3. Be clear about rules and boundaries.
4. Minor behaviour such as not listening, grabbing toys of other children will result in the children being encouraged to say sorry and return the item. If any damage has occurred the child will be encouraged to put it right, clear up etc.
5. If a child or practitioner has been hurt both physically and/or emotionally the offending child will be encouraged to apologise and where appropriate/needed have some time out (as outlined below).
6. If children are doing something that they shouldn't be we will explain to them what we would like them to do.
7. If we have a child with challenging behaviour we will prioritise the behaviour that we will respond to.
8. If problems persist the child's key person will discuss the behaviour with parents confidentially.

Using thinking/quiet time: The main aim of all practitioners should be to avoid getting to this point in the first place.

If a child hurts/bites or hits another child in the garden, we will, when possible, use a quiet area of the garden or ask the child to stand by your side to think. **Use 1 minute per year of the child's age**, away from other children. Speaking during this time would be considered a reward. At the end of 'thinking time', reflect on the behaviour, how the child feels and how the injured child may be feeling and the child should be encouraged to apologise for their behaviour. This will be done by the adult who deemed the behaviour to be unacceptable. **An incident form will also be filled in.**

If the same child is known to show aggression outside, try distracting and diverting the child – intervene early and regularly reinforce positive behaviours and inform the child's key person.

Refusal: all children are expected to line up when the bell rings to be counted before going inside. Children are made aware of going inside through 'tidy-up time'. If a child continually does not line up when the bell rings, an adult will seek

out that child prior to the bell being rung and stand by the gate. Praise/positive language can be given as you wait for other children to join the line. "Wow, look at us waiting patiently to go inside." Talk about the importance of lining up for safety. In key groups, 'practise' lining up for the bell, again with lots of praise when the child joins the line.

Playtime Games:

Promoting a range of playtime games help to develop imagination, cooperation, negotiation, turn-taking and leadership. Whole group games can contribute to positive behaviour and eliminate stress. Examples of playtime games are:

- What's the Time, Mr Wolf?
- Duck, Duck, Goose
- Simon Says
- Red Light, Green Light
- Jumping Beans
- Queelio Cockio
- The Keeper of the Treasure
- Captain's Coming
- Hide & Seek
- Red Letter
- Please Mr Crocodile

Playtime games should not last longer than 10 minutes, and children will choose the game prior to going outside. E.g. if children choose What's the Time, Mr Wolf? they will know to line up by the wall as they enter the garden.

Clothing:

Clothing must be appropriate for the weather, including winter coats, rain coats, sun hats and sensible shoes. We will provide a weather box, with wellington boots, umbrellas & a few spare hats. Parents are expected to provide a bag of spare clothes including: underwear, socks, trousers, top and sun hat for PE, Water Play and any accidents. Practitioners are expected to model sensible clothing.

Appropriate footwear must be worn; footwear must give good traction between feet and climbing equipment. No exposed feet/open toe/ill-fitting shoes. If practitioners feel that footwear is unsuitable they will use their discretion to restrict a child from a particular area of the playground or bike/scooter play.

During colder weather, children are expected to wear a thick coat suitable for outdoor play. Scarves should be worn inside coats and practitioners will be vigilant with items of clothing that have hoods (protruding objects). Gloves will be removed for climbing. Children will wear sun hats and we are committed to ensuring that all children are kept safe from the risks of sun.

Sun-safety:

We follow sun-safe procedures:

- Practitioners will ensure outdoor play will be limited in extreme hot weather between 11 am – 2pm to ensure children are not exposed to the sun at its hottest.
- All children must be provided with suitable clothing and a named bottle of sun cream.
- Children will have sun cream applied before all outdoor play and we ask parents to support this by sending children to nursery with sun cream already applied.
- Any child not supplied with sun cream may not be able to access the outdoor area.

- The nursery has some designated areas for shade which will be given priority to the younger children and rotated for the older children to have a cooling off period.
- Children will be offered water at frequent intervals during the day, and a water station will be available for access in the garden.
- Parents will provide a named water bottle for their child in Term 6 unless advised otherwise.