



Lidget Green Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Outdoor Learning Policy

Signed by the Head Teacher: _____

Version 1/ Dated: January 2022

Rationale

At Lidget Green Primary School, we believe the outdoor learning environment is as important as the indoor learning environment. We value outdoor play as an intrinsic part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum.

'The younger the child the more the child learns through sensory and physical activities; thus the more varied and rich the natural outdoor setting, the greater its contribution to physical, cognitive and emotional development.' Rifkin 1997

Through play in a secure environment with effective adult support, children will:

- explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
- practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills
- understand the need for rules
- be alone, be alongside others or cooperate as they talk or rehearse their feelings
- take risks, investigate, make predictions and learn from trial and error
- think creatively and imaginatively
- communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems

We believe the outdoor learning environment should complement the indoor learning environment and offer activities in a much larger, messier and bolder way.

The outdoor learning environment should provide opportunities for:

- children to have choice in their learning and in the activities that they choose
- living things to be observed in the natural environment
- the weather, seasons and the effects of these to be observed and experienced first-hand.
- children to be more physically active, enjoy recreation through 'loose parts play'
- children to develop socially through 'immersive dramatic play'
- developing children's physical, mental and emotional learning
- children to take an active role in planning their own learning
- children to feel confident to express their feelings
- children to explore, experiment with natural resources, investigate and discover the world around them in a safe and enabling environment.

Aims

“The environment is the third teacher.” Loris Malaguzzi

At Lidget Green we aim for our outdoor area to provide young children with one of the best possible environments in which to learn by creating an environment that promotes enthusiasm, enjoyment and confidence.

We value outdoor play as an essential part of the curriculum and aim to provide a stimulating outdoor learning environment that supports learning in all areas of the EYFS curriculum and gives children the opportunity to take risks and face challenges in a supportive environment. Our objectives are to provide a holistic well-balanced outdoor curriculum and activities to support the health and well-being of all our children.

We believe that each child will succeed through:

- A broad, enriched and challenging curriculum that recognises children’s different talents and different needs and provides appropriate individual learning experiences.
- A commitment to each child and member of the school being valued in a nurturing and inclusive manner.
- A happy, stimulating and nurturing atmosphere woven within a learning ethos of support, challenge and encouragement.
- Provision of a rich range of learning resources where learning is fun and effort and achievement are celebrated.

Adult roles and responsibilities

“There are three teachers of children: adults, other children, and their physical environment.”– Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education

Planning for outdoor learning should recognise the area as an extension of the indoor learning area as well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge.

The Head of Early Years (Mrs Warbrick) will work closely with the Outdoor Lead (Miss Maqsood) to coordinate effective outdoor education for all EYFS children by managing and supporting colleagues in their planning, preparation and practice, and by otherwise contributing to a stimulating learning environment.

The role of the class teachers is to:

- lead planning and identify resources for a challenging outdoor curriculum that is aligned to the indoor planning
- be responsible for the planning and resourcing of the Learning Sheds when introducing a new topic (every half-term).
- create an inclusive outdoor learning environment to support greater depth learning and differentiated activities for LA and SEND children

- identify staff to support adult focus and child-led activities

The role of the adults working in the outdoor area each day is to:

- set up and store equipment safely
- monitor and ensure children use the outdoor area safely
- update and replenish each of the 'Learning Sheds' as necessary
- be an active role- model interacting and supporting children's learning and planned activities
- provide varied opportunities for supporting and encouraging all children to explore and extend their experiences
- scaffold children's ideas and imaginative play
- wear appropriate clothing and advise parents and carers on suitable clothing and footwear for outdoor learning
- extend and develop children's language and communication in their play consult and involve children in planning

The role of all staff is to:

- observe key children/focus children and plan appropriately to consolidate and extend children's learning, development and skills
- support all colleagues
- ensure appropriate staff ratios are maintained

Planning outdoor play

At Lidget Green we believe that close observations of children's learning is essential in order to assess children's ability, to ensure appropriate planning and continuity for the outdoor curriculum. Observation outdoors will help to build up a holistic picture of individual children's development and inform our planning.

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

In planning learning opportunities, adults must consider the following points:

- the specific purpose of the outdoor play.
- individual, cooperative and parallel play.
- skills, knowledge, concepts and attitudes to be acquired/developed by the children.
- safe and appropriate use of the area and resources.
- staff interaction, guidance and support.
- balance/breadth of curriculum provision.
- alteration, addition or removal of resources.
- quality play.

- planned outdoor activities should be covering the areas of learning and development within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

When working outdoors, adults must ensure that the outdoor area is well laid out and provides for:

- challenging and exciting play (big construction, climbing equipment)
- immersive role-play and small world play
- creative, music, dance and art and design activities
- mark-making, writing, number problem solving
- sand/water/messy play
- exploring natural materials such as leaves, sticks, bark, mud, pebbles etc
- coverage of all areas of learning

Health and Safety in the playground

Our Health and Safety policy says that the health and safety of all the children is the foremost priority of all the staff. We have a corporate responsibility and duty of care towards those who work in and receive a service from the school. Individual employees and service users also have responsibility for ensuring their own health and safety as well as that of others.

We work within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'s safeguarding and welfare requirements. The general legal requirements, including those concerning health and safety, are supported by more detailed specific legal requirements. Both the general and specific legal requirements have the force of regulations and must be complied with by all early years providers.

Safety in the outdoor area, equipment and resources

It is the responsibility of all the staff to:

- read and follow the School's behaviour policy - **Appendix 1**
- read and follow the risk assessment and safety rules for the outdoor learning environment- **Appendix 2**
- check the play equipment and toys are safe and in good condition. It is important that all furniture is kept in good condition. i.e. free from splinters, loose joints, protruding bolts or screws etc.
- carry out safety checks using the checklist when setting up in the morning **Appendix 3.**
- check the playground surface is maintained in good sound condition to minimise slips and trips.
- check equipment is free of ice before use in winter
- always be aware of the safety of the children in their care, be vigilant at all times and never leave the outdoor area for any reason unless another member of staff has taken over responsibility.

- whenever children carry equipment they should be taught how to do it safely. Adults should be aware of the risks involved and minimise them to ensure safety.

To ensure the safety of all children, an adult to child ratio (1:13 for Nursery, 1:21 for Reception) should be maintained in the playground. It is most important for staff to move around the playground so that all areas are adequately supervised and all learning can be supported.

At the end of the session the playground should be scanned carefully to ensure that no child is left outside unsupervised. Staff need to ensure that students on placement helping outdoors are not left in charge of the playground.

If it is necessary for an adult to put toys away while children are still in the playground, there must always be at least one other member of staff supervising the remaining children. All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy access the next day. It is important all play equipment is given an annual safety inspection organised by the Site Manager (Mr Parkin).

Children are encouraged to climb and balance independently and to be aware of the level of their own abilities. Adults should offer encouragement while being aware of their safety. Children must be taught to look before jumping off apparatus and to leave space between themselves and the child in front when climbing up/down apparatus.

Children's clothing should be monitored carefully. Unfastened buckles or scarves which are too long can easily cause accidents, particularly on wheeled toys.

Children have the opportunity to explore outdoor learning in a variety of weather conditions. Adults should always be aware of the effects of weather on the children working outside and act appropriately. Children should have the appropriate clothing to enable them to do this safely, such as being encouraged to wear sun hats in the Summer months and warmer clothing (hat, scarves and gloves) in the Winter months. Children must have the opportunity to come indoors if they are too hot and have access to drinking water at all times. In the colder months children and staff are encouraged to wrap up in warm, suitable clothing and to use the wellington boots that are available if appropriate. Children are able to choose to come inside if they are cold and staff may swap roles.

Staff will report to Mrs Warbrick and Miss Maqsood if they feel there are extreme weather conditions which may not be suitable or safe for children. When the temperature is significantly low in the winter months and too cold or too wet for children to play outside comfortably, the outdoor session should be no longer than 20 minutes.

First Aid

The EYFS curriculum requires that there is at least one L3 Paediatric-qualified First Aider available in the Unit at all times. (see First Aid policy for the current list of First Aiders)

If a child is injured he/she should be handed to a member of staff indoors as quickly as possible for treatment so that supervision of the outdoor area is not interrupted. Details of the accident must be written up as soon as possible in the playground accident book. The child's parent must be informed of the accident and treatment given.

Equality and Inclusion

At Lidget Green Primary School we value all children, regardless of gender, race or Special need. We are committed to provide equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring every child is included and supported. Our ethos is to ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference, so that every child is included and not disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.

We aim to provide a range of opportunities that will support and extend children in their learning outdoors and also plan specific learning for groups or individual children. We aim to ensure that boys and girls are given equal access to all areas. Learning for children with Special Educational Needs is planned in line with their EHCP or other advice and their needs are taken into consideration when outside activities are planned.

In Early Years our most important goal and the fundamental foundation of our approach to inclusion is the child's wellbeing. We will meet the individual needs of all children by:

- valuing each child for whom they are and recognising differences; so, they feel understood whatever their ability, ethnic background or gender.
- valuing each child's culture by making connections between experiences at home, my setting and the wider community.
- talking to parents and/or carers about their child's progress and development, planning appropriate support where identified.
- delivering personalised learning, development and care to help children get the best possible start in life.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Behaviour Policy

Appendix 2- Risk Assessment and Safety Rules

Appendix 3- Safety checks list

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Appendix 3