

Newington
Primary School
Outdoor Play
Policy



Reviewed - August 2024

Policy statement

At Newington Primary School, we recognise the importance, and value, placed on outdoor play and its role in children's learning. We believe that outdoors should provide opportunities for children to engage in planned and freely chosen play experiences and offer risk, challenge, variety and fun. Outdoor play is a vital element of young children's physical; and personal, social and emotional development. Play is a young child's mechanism and medium for learning and helps to improve their speech and communication skills. Therefore, making the most out of outdoor play is essential, providing rich and varied experiences for children in our Primary One—Three classes.

Outdoor play provides opportunities for children to develop their large and small muscles, experience a different environment from the indoors and have access to sunlight, which supports absorption of vitamin D in the body. As part of our daily routine all children will have the opportunity to explore the infant large outdoor learning environment and will participate in planned/free choice learning activities regardless of the weather.

We provide a variety of large and small resources which cover all areas of the curriculum, including the role play areas, sandpit, digging bays, gardening areas and a creative station as well as smaller boxed resources and bikes, prams and scooters.

The outdoor area will be set up daily with a variety of adult supported and a range of loose parts, allowing all children to learn, explore and problem solve in their natural environment and build on their investigative skills, risk taking, independence and self esteem. Equipment will be stored in designated outdoor containers; the toys and equipment will be monitored and risk assessed to ensure that no parts are missing or broken. All equipment found to be in an unsafe condition will be removed from further use. An adult will risk assess the area each day to ensure it is hazard free before allowing children to enter.

Safety

Primary One, Two and Three staff are committed to providing a safe and secure outdoor space. Staff will ensure a robust risk assessment is carried out before children enter our outdoor space and of all planned activities. Staff will model behaviour which will allow children to become engaged in their learning, whilst taking risks safely. At this moment children do not have access to a water proof coat, so we ask parents to supply appropriate clothing for all weathers such as sun hats and sun screen for the warmer months and hats, gloves, coats and wellington boots for the colder months. Staff do have access to a waterproof coat and should wear appropriate clothing and footwear to lead and participate in a range of outdoor activities, in all weathers.

Sun Care

In Primary One—Three, we are committed to ensuring that all children are kept safe from the risks of sun and understand the damage sunburn can have to a child later in life. We adopt the 'Slip, slop and slap' message for applying sun cream in hot weather.

Staff will ensure:

- Outdoor play will be limited in **extreme hot weather** to ensure children are not exposed to the sun at its hottest.
- Children should have sun cream applied and we ask parents to support this by sending children to school with sun cream already applied.
- Any child not supplied with sun cream may not be able to access the outdoor area.
- Children will be offered water at frequent intervals during the day.
- Shaded areas will be provided during hot weather.

Wet Weather

Parents are requested to ensure their own child dresses appropriately for the weather conditions.

Children will enter the outside area during wet weather unless, it is torrential rain and children will get too wet. Parents will be encouraged to provide a spare set of clothing which will be kept in school to enable children to change if required.

Cold weather

Children will be dressed appropriately with coats, hats and gloves before playing out. We ask parents to support us with this by ensuring their child has the appropriate warm clothing.

The role of the adult

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 play area, including when children use the pirate ship.
- Interact with the children and support them to take risks safely as well as modelling how to use the equipment safely.
- Join in the children's play if invited to and support the development of ideas and learning.
- Set up the outdoor learning space with a range of suitable resources.
- Answer children's questions and develop children's knowledge of the outside environment and the natural world they live in.
- 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.

The role of the child:

- To report any broken or damaged equipment.
- To report any other child not playing safely.
- To follow instructions by the lead adult.
- To walk within the play areas and to be mindful of other people when moving around.
- To manage their own risk safely.
- Enjoy and work hard to develop skills within this area.
- Tidy up materials and the area before they leave.