

New Machar School Nursery Outdoor Play Policy



Background

'Curriculum for Excellence offers opportunities for all children and young people to enjoy first-hand experience outdoors, whether within the school grounds, in urban green spaces, in Scotland's countryside or in wilder environments. Such experiences motivate our children and young people to become successful learners and to develop as healthy, confident, enterprising and responsible citizens.'

Education Scotland - 2016

Aims

At New Machar Nursery we aim to provide children with opportunities for outdoor play which promotes the development of confidence, coordination, well-being and strength.

Objectives:

- ❖ To provide a safe and supportive outdoor environment which encourages children to participate in physical activities providing adventure, personal challenge and enjoyment.
- ❖ To promote social skills such as sharing, turn taking, decision making, co-operation with others, negotiation and fairness.
- ❖ To provide a balanced programme of learning experiences and opportunities as set out in Curriculum for Excellence.

Nursery policy for implementation

The nursery will provide opportunities for outdoor play activities supporting children's cognitive, emotional, physical and social needs. Emphasis will be placed on using the outdoor environment as a valuable resource to stimulate and challenge the children as they play and learn. There will be opportunities for the children to enjoy fresh air and develop awareness of seasonal weather changes.

The freedom and space of the outdoor environment will afford opportunities for:

- ❖ Imaginative play
- ❖ Creative and investigative play
- ❖ Development of spatial awareness
- ❖ Building skills of control and co-ordination within gross and fine motor activities.
- ❖ Becoming aware of personal safety and the safety of others
- ❖ Learning to co-operate with others in active play, games and in social play.
- ❖ Taking time to sit and observe others at play.

The nursery team will consider how best to encourage and support all children towards gaining confidence to participate. The outdoor play activities and experiences will be delivered through a planned programme of activities, some of which, will be linked to the current context of learning within the nursery. Appropriate resources will be provided and these will be identified in short-term planning. There will also be opportunity for Free Flowing Play. This offers children an element of choice helping them develop decision making skills and independence.

Safety and security

A daily risk assessment of the outdoor play area will be conducted before children go out to play (Appendix 1). This will include checking for:

- ❖ Damage to fences & gates.
- ❖ Vandalism
- ❖ Hazards such as broken glass, mud, discarded items, dog fouling.
- ❖ Cracks, holes or other damage to play area surface.
- ❖ Broken or raised drain covers.
- ❖ Daily checking of any fixed equipment.
- ❖ **N.B.** Annual maintenance of fixed equipment is also carried out (Appendix 2).

Attached Appendix 3 is the completed Risk Assessments.

Arrangements are in place to:

- ❖ Supervise children returning indoors to use the toilets.
- ❖ Have prompt access to the first aid box.
- ❖ Ensure children are adequately clothed for current weather.

During free flow periods of the session:

- ❖ Each area will have at least one adult supervising.
- ❖ Normal staff: child ratios will be maintained at all times.
- ❖ Staff are expected to call for assistance if they feel they have more than their ratio of children. Outdoors, staff would have a walkie talkie to communicate inside.

Throughout the Nursery year, during Outdoor Play, we will work towards gaining resources to allow for opportunities to experience a range of activities including:

- ❖ A place to dig and plant in a garden area, raised bed or containers. Using tools and equipment such as a wheelbarrow.
 - Planting things to observe. (E.g. Bulbs, annuals, evergreens.)
 - Planting things to eat for snack. (E.g. Carrots, lettuce, strawberries.)

- ❖ Investigation table. (E.g. Large magnets, large magnifying cubes)
- ❖ Opportunities to feed the birds
- ❖ Observing birds, butterflies, mini-beasts.
- ❖ A designated area for messy play.
 - Sand (with cover)
 - Water and water 'painting' with brushes or rollers.
 - Chalking (Wet or dry.)
- ❖ Engagement with our "Mud" kitchen
- ❖ Table for small world imaginative play.
- ❖ Large size floor jigsaws. (E.g. Wooden or foam.)
- ❖ Large construction. (E.g. Edra, Community Playthings large blocks.)
- ❖ Obstacle courses with low benches, planks, jumping cubes & tunnels. (E.g. Hope cubes and steps, ASCO planks, flexi hoops, flexi-tunnels.)
- ❖ Investigation Box (E.g. Windy weather box with variety of streamers, balloons & balloon pumps & string, bubble mixture, plastic windmills, small kite.)
- ❖ Role play (E.g. Dressing up as pirates, theme-linked role play)
- ❖ Skipping, running, throwing & catching games.
- ❖ Hopscotch or games painted on ground.
- ❖ Ride-on toys including bikes, trikes and scooters.
- ❖ Ride around obstacle courses or on painted 'roadways'.
- ❖ Small Parachutes
- ❖ Blankets & rugs to sit on or to use for building tents and 'dens'.

Staffing:

- ❖ Local Authority staff/child ratio to be maintained outdoors and indoors.
- ❖ Nursery team to be clear about issues of safety and supervision.
- ❖ Adult on outdoor / indoor duty must be a qualified member of the team.
- ❖ Students on nursery placement visits cannot be left in charge and must work under the direct supervision of a qualified staff member.
- ❖ A designated person has responsibility for carrying out the daily safety checks.
- ❖ Children must not access the outdoor area until the nursery team know that it is hazard free.
- ❖ The nursery team are responsible for setting out the portable equipment and ensuring that it is safely returned to the storage points at the end of the nursery day.

Information to parents

- ❖ Parents are aware that the outdoor play area is used as an 'outdoor classroom' across all seasons of the year.
- ❖ Parental co-operation is required to ensure that jackets, hats & footwear are weather appropriate.
- ❖ At induction meetings, in the nursery handbook and a poster in the cloakroom will remind parents to dress their children weather appropriately.

- ❖ Parental help, PTA assistance or allocation of funding will be required to retain a small 'emergency clothing bank' of spare waterproofs, fleece tops, trousers, scarves, socks, pants & jumpers.

Planning, recording and assessment

The curriculum planning format identifies the focus areas for the planned learning experiences for Outdoor Play to be delivered and assessed across each term. Weekly plans identify specific activities, which aim to deliver appropriate learning experiences. The nursery team select and set out appropriate resources to support learning.

Assessment of learning outcomes will be carried out through a variety of information gathering strategies. Photographic evidence will be kept showing the range of outdoor play activities on offer across the nursery year. Where appropriate, copies of these may be placed in Pupil Learning Journeys or Interactive Learning Diaries. The information gathered during the assessment process is used to inform the 'next steps' in the future planning of activities.

This policy is written with reference to:

- The Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning Document
<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/approaches/outdoorlearning/about/cfethroughoutdoorlearning.asp> (Date accessed: 28th Jan 2016)

Outdoor Play Policy Appendix 1

Outdoor Play Equipment Daily Check Sheet					
<p>Visual check of all fixed equipment and play area is necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please tick the appropriate box if equipment / area is satisfactory. ▪ If a minor repair was carried out to make the equipment or area safe please note the action taken. (E.g. Broken glass removed, drain cover replaced.) ▪ If a repair cannot be made please note the defect. <p>Notify the nursery staff that the outdoor play area cannot be used. Notify the head teacher of the repair required.</p>					
Week beginning:	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
Play surface					
Paths					
Gate					
Storage shed / container					
Action taken to remove hazard or effect repair:					
Play area is unsafe. Action required:					
Signature of person carrying out visual check:					
<p>Defects to look for:</p> <p>Foundations cracked, or loose. Sharp edges, broken edges, protrusions, sharp points. Rusting or rot. Gate catches broken / missing. Holes in fence or other damaged to fence. Drain covers sticking up or missing. Nails or screw sticking out. Cracks or holes on ground surface. Broken glass; discarded objects (needles, matches, etc.); dog fouling.</p>					

Outdoor Play Policy Appendix 2

Outdoor Play Equipment Annual or Termly Check of Fixed Equipment		
Please complete and give to depute head teacher.		
One sheet for each fixed item of equipment.		
Name of equipment / storage.		
State of repair around the equipment.		
Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Date:	Date:	Date:
Comment:	Comment:	Comment:
Action required:	Action required:	Action required:
Signature:	Signature:	Signature:
Date of Annual Inspection:		
Comment:		
Action required:		
Signature:		

Appendix 3- See Separate Risk Assessments