



Play, Learn and Grow Together

Outdoor Play Policy

Hart Memorial Nursery is fully committed to the value of outdoor play opportunities, throughout the seasons. Outdoor play is essential for all aspects of a child's development. Outdoor play can provide children with experiences which enable them to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically. In doing so, it provides a rich context for the development of their language and encourages positive attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle.

Outdoor play should be seen as an integral part of early years' provision. At Hart Memorial Nursery the aim of both indoor and outdoor play is to provide a stimulating environment for children's learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. Close observation is essential in order to assess children's ability and to ensure appropriate planning and continuity for the outdoor curriculum.

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

The Outdoor Area

The outdoor area is a large space which is well laid out and ensures provision for all of the six areas of learning. The outdoor environment provides for:

- challenging and exciting play
- safety
- grassed, hard and safety surfaced areas
- shady areas
- growing/digging areas - garden soil, compost, tubs, vegetable and flower beds, planting tubs - gardening for different seasons, sowing seeds, harvesting vegetables, providing opportunities for world around us activities, caring and responsibility
- exploring area with trees, shrubs to attract insects, bark and log piles to provide habitats for mini-beasts
- a covered sand house, pebble house and digging house which protects the sand / pebbles / soil from animals and is roofed
- quiet, reflective areas and busy, moving play areas
- developing exploration and imagination
- opportunities for large scale experiences

Planning Outdoor Play

Adults must consider the following points:

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

To ensure balance and breadth of provision, when planning for outdoor learning adults should think carefully about what the provision should include and why. They need to 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 should be flexibility to meet individual children's needs as they arise. Resources should be available to enhance and extend play.

The Role of the Adult Outdoors

Adults should be actively involved with children in their games and activities and should not be solely in a supervisory role. Adults should be:

- talking with children in a variety of ways (conversing, discussing, questioning, modelling and commentating)
- helping children to find solutions to problems
- supporting, encouraging
- extending their activities by making extra resources available and providing new ideas
- initiating games and activities
- joining in games and activities when invited by children
- observing, assessing and recording
- being aware of safety issues
- being aware of every child's equal right of access to a full outdoor curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated regardless of race, culture, religion, gender or disability
- evaluating observations in order to plan appropriate resources and experiences

In these ways, adults are making positive contributions to the children's play and creating challenging situations for children to experience.

Learning Opportunities in the Outdoors

There are many opportunities for the six key learning areas (as outlined in the Pre-School curriculum guidance) to be enhanced outdoors, in varied and challenging ways:

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2. Language Development
3. Early Mathematical Experiences
4. World Around Us
5. Physical Development and Movement
6. The Arts

Please see Curriculum Policy for further detail

Reviewed: November 2019

Health and Safety

- when setting out the equipment each day staff complete a daily risk assessment checklist (See Appendix 1).
- staff must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care and never leave the play area for any reason unless another member of staff has taken over responsibility
- it is important for staff to move around constantly so that all areas are adequately supervised. Each person should position him/herself in separate areas so that no area is unsupervised
- children should be counted at the end of outdoor play before moving indoors
- hot drinks should not be taken into the outdoor areas
- students helping outdoors must never be left in charge of any area
- all equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy removal next day. All items should be clean and fit for use
- if a child is injured he/she should be taken indoors for treatment quickly as possible if necessary; if possible the child should be treated with the portable first aid kit outdoors. Both child and staff member should remain within sight of another member of staff while treatment takes place. Details of the accident must be written up as soon as possible in the first aid book
- children's clothing should be monitored carefully e.g. unfastened shoelaces and buckles, scarves and ties on anoraks which are too long can easily cause accidents, particularly on wheeled toys and climbing equipment
- wheeled toys should only be used on the car track unless as part of a specific activity (e.g. car wash at the water area)
- each child will wear a helmet when using wheeled vehicles
- encourage children always to look before they move on the slide, or when jumping off apparatus; also encourage children to leave space between themselves and the child in front when crossing planks or climbing up/down apparatus
- when children are climbing on climbing frames, staff must be continually aware of any risks (e.g. objects left underneath)
- children will be taught how to carry equipment (clearing away or carrying planks etc.). Adults will be aware of the risks involved and minimise these to ensure safety

APPENDIX 1

Staff Member _____ **Outdoor Area** _____ **Date** _____

- Use this safety checklist to examine and report on the safety of the outdoor area each day.

Tick/ Cross	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Is the area free from litter?					
Is the area free from glass?					
Is all equipment in good working order?					
Is all equipment safe and clean to use?					
Has all equipment been stored correctly?					
Are all exits secure & free from obstructions?					
All storage units sturdy and secure?					
Gate closes properly?					
Gate lock working effectively?					
Surface safe, undamaged and free from trip hazards?					
Entrance free from obstructions?					
Is the site free from health/hygiene hazards eg animal faeces, needles, berries/ fungus?					
Weather changes- rain/ice/ snow/ wet leaves					

Report any daily issues to the Principal and Building Supervisor and complete the report log.

Thank you for ensuring that this area is safe from hazards

