



EYFS Outdoor Learning Policy

Aims and Values of Outdoor Learning

At Yatton Schools, we recognise the vital role that outdoor learning plays in supporting children's development, wellbeing and progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage. We are committed to providing high-quality outdoor learning experiences that enable children to explore, investigate, take appropriate risks and develop confidence, resilience and independence.

We believe that outdoor learning offers unique opportunities for children to engage deeply with their learning, supporting physical development, communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and an understanding of the world. Outdoor learning is an integral part of our EYFS curriculum and is valued equally alongside indoor learning.

Intent

During the Reception year, we believe that learning outdoors is an essential and purposeful part of children's daily experience. Outdoor learning is planned with clear intention to complement and extend learning that takes place indoors, ensuring children are able to make strong progress across all seven areas of the EYFS curriculum.

Through our outdoor provision, we aim to:

- Support children's individual interests, curiosity and motivation
- Develop children's understanding of the natural world
- Provide a language-rich environment that promotes talk, vocabulary and communication
- Support physical development, coordination and motor skills
- Encourage collaboration, problem-solving and independence
- Enable children to explore and manage appropriate levels of risk safely

Implementation

Outdoor learning is planned as part of our overall EYFS curriculum and reflects the same high expectations as indoor provision. Children regularly access carefully planned indoor and outdoor environments which allow them to revisit, practise and deepen their learning across all areas of the curriculum.

Outdoor areas are resourced with open-ended materials to promote creativity, exploration and sustained engagement. Adults support learning through careful observation, interaction and skilful questioning, ensuring that children's play leads to meaningful learning and progress.

A balance of child-initiated learning and adult-guided experiences ensures that all children are supported and challenged appropriately, in line with their individual starting points.

Health and Safety

Staff carry out regular safety checks of outdoor areas and equipment. Dynamic risk assessments are made throughout the day to ensure children are able to explore and play safely while developing confidence, self-regulation and an understanding of risk.

Children are taught clear expectations for safe behaviour outdoors, including agreed boundaries and appropriate use of equipment. Risk is managed thoughtfully and proportionately to support learning rather than limit it.

Equality and Inclusion

Yatton Schools is committed to ensuring that all children can access and benefit from outdoor learning, regardless of ability or need. Outdoor spaces are planned to be inclusive and accessible, supporting children with a wide range of needs and abilities.

Provision is adapted where necessary to ensure that all children feel safe, valued and able to participate fully. Quiet spaces, sensory experiences and flexible resources are provided to meet individual needs, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Outdoor learning practice is regularly monitored and evaluated by EYFS staff to ensure it remains effective, inclusive and responsive to children's needs. Observations, assessment and professional dialogue inform ongoing improvements to provision.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or in response to updates in EYFS guidance or school practice.

Appendix: Operational Guidance for Outdoor Learning

(EYFS – Yatton Schools)

This appendix supports the EYFS Outdoor Learning Policy and outlines specific operational arrangements to ensure outdoor learning is safe, inclusive and effective.

Organisation of Outdoor Spaces

The outdoor learning environment is organised into three distinct areas:

- The large playground
- The small playground
- The garden

Children are taught clear boundaries and expectations for each space. At the beginning of the year, staff explicitly teach children which areas are out of bounds. These include:

- Behind the shed in the large playground
- The scooter and bike shed
- The sectioned-off garden area used by gardening club
- Any roped-off or restricted areas identified by staff

Boundaries are revisited regularly to ensure children's understanding and safety.

Tree Climbing

Tree climbing is viewed as a valuable opportunity for children to develop confidence, coordination and risk awareness.

At the beginning of the year, children are taught how to climb the maple tree in the garden safely. Once this has been modelled and practised, children may climb independently.

- Climbing height is assessed on a child-by-child basis
- A general guideline is that children should not climb higher than halfway up the tree
- Adults carry out dynamic risk assessments and intervene where necessary

Bikes and Scooters

Bikes and scooters are used within the large playground to support physical development and coordination.

- When bikes or scooters are used alongside PE equipment, children are asked to ride or scoot at the top end of the playground
- Clear expectations are taught regarding safe speed, awareness of others and appropriate behaviour
- Equipment is checked regularly to ensure it is safe and fit for purpose

First Aid

If a child requires first aid, they are sent to the adult inside the classroom in the first instance, provided it is safe for the child to move.

- Staff follow the school's First Aid Policy at all times
- Serious incidents are reported in line with school procedures

Weapon and Superhero Play

Yatton Schools recognises that role play, including superhero and weapon play, can form a meaningful part of children's imaginative development.

Our approach is guided by the following principles:

- Role play reflects children's interests and experiences
- Planning is informed by observation and assessment of children's play
- Positive attributes of superheroes, such as helping others and fairness, are emphasised
- Physical violence and unsafe behaviour are not permitted
- Children's emotional wellbeing and involvement are carefully monitored
- Teaching approaches remain flexible and responsive rather than based on fixed assumptions

These principles are explored through discussion, story, drama and adult guidance, and are reviewed regularly with staff and families.

Weather and Clothing

Children are expected to access outdoor learning throughout the year in a range of weather conditions.

- Parents are asked to provide named wellington boots and waterproof clothing, which remain in school
- During sunny weather, children must bring a named sun hat
- Sun cream should be applied at home before school; if reapplication is needed, a named bottle should be provided and applied by the child with adult support
- Spare waterproofs, wellies and sun hats are kept in school where possible

If suitable clothing is unavailable, access to outdoor learning may be restricted to ensure children's comfort and safety.

Equality and Inclusion in Outdoor Learning

Outdoor learning is planned to ensure inclusion for all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

This includes:

- Ensuring outdoor spaces are accessible
- Providing quiet areas for children who need time away from busy environments
- Offering sensory-rich experiences using texture, light and natural materials
- Adapting provision and support to meet individual needs

Staff work closely with families and external professionals to ensure outdoor learning is meaningful and inclusive for every child.