

Steelstown Nursery Unit

OUTDOOR PLAY POLICY February 2018

“When children play out of doors, they are exercising their growing intellectual and emotional muscles, as well as their physical ones. They are developing the power to think, to feel, to do, to see and understand, to represent and express. They are imagining, puzzling, wondering, exploring, befriending and sharing”.

*“Can I: Play Out” Outdoor Play in the Early Years – Bradford
LEA 1995 Taken from the forward written by Mary Jane
Drummond*

“The best classroom and the widest cupboard is in the open air”.

Margaret Macmillan

Purpose

The aim of our Outdoor play policy is to provide play that is inventive, adventurous and stimulating. The development of gross and fine motor skills together with self-confidence and self-awareness is what we strive to achieve.

Rationale

At Steelstown Nursery we believe that:

- Outdoor play is central to young children’s learning.
- Indoors and outdoors is viewed as one combined and integrated environment and are of equal importance.
- The Children’s safety is extremely important and outdoor play is supervised closely at all times.
- Weather permitting, outdoor play will take place daily.
- All needs and abilities will be catered for.
- All equipment must be maintained to highest standard and replenished where necessary.
- Outdoors is both a teaching and learning environment, where adults interact with children to extend their knowledge, skills and concepts.
- Outdoor design and layout is given careful consideration.
- The outdoor classroom offers children the opportunity to use effective styles of learning – playing, movement and sensory experience.
- Children are given a wide range of open-ended equipment and environments.
- Children are able to control, change and modify their environment.

These are the key principles that underpin effective outdoor play.

Practices

- Before the arrival of the children in the morning, the staff prepare the playground with outdoor equipment (weather permitting).
- All equipment and rules are introduced to the children in small groups at the beginning of the year.
- Outdoor play will be initially offered in the morning at a set time but as the term progresses, it will be more flexible allowing children more time to explore outside.
- Staff participation/engagement is very important
- Imaginative positioning and use of space/resources is important and will offer challenges to ensure progression.
- Children must be appropriately dressed for weather conditions i.e. winter and summer
- It may be necessary in inclement weather to carry physical activity out under the covered canopy.
- Indoor equipment may also be taken outdoors in fine weather with due consideration to safety in the sun.

Links to Curriculum

Each of the Nursery Curriculum Areas of Learning are developed through Outdoor Play.

1. Developing Personal, Social and Emotional Learning Through Outdoor Play

- The resources and experiences outside provide opportunities for children to develop co-operation and build relationships.
- Children are encouraged to work together, take turns and help each other.
- Children are encouraged to take responsibility for the resources in the outside area. They are able to set up the areas and tidy resources away.
- The organisation and management of outdoors supports children in initiating and developing their own ideas and interests.
- Children are encouraged to develop a sense of wonder about living things and natural phenomena.
- Children develop their understanding and show respect for living things.
- The resources and experiences outside provide opportunities for children to act out their feelings.

2. Developing Language and Literacy Through Outdoor Play

- There is a good range of stimulating first-hand experiences for children and adults to talk about.
- There are places for children to talk with each other.
- Reading and writing are incorporated into activities and experiences. They are relevant and meaningful to children's interests and patterns of learning.

- Children are encouraged to use the written word or write for a range of purposes, e.g. signs, messages, tickets.
- Non-fiction books are a stimulus for investigations outdoors.
- Stories are told/read/re-enacted outside.
- Children are encouraged to express their ideas, interests through role play.

3. Developing Mathematical Learning Through Outdoor Play

- Children are encouraged to explore patterns, shape, measurement and numbers in the natural and made world. There are resources to support this range of learning.
- The available resources enable children to solve mathematical problems.
- Staff encourage children to develop and use their mathematical language.
- The range of equipment enables children to work on a large scale.
- Children are encouraged to play mathematical games with large equipment.
- Numbers are incorporated into children's play.
- Children are encouraged to write numbers or record mathematical ideas in relevant and appropriate ways.

4. Developing Learning About Knowledge and Understanding of the World Through Outdoor Play

- Children are encouraged to observe and express their ideas about similarities and differences in the natural world.
- Children are encouraged to explore the physical environment and are able to solve problems in their own way.
- Changes in the weather are used to stimulate investigative work.
- There is a good range of natural and made materials for children and adults to talk about.
- There is a sufficient range of resources to develop children's interest in movement.
- Children are able to use a range of natural and made materials to design, make and build
- The outside area is organised so that children are provided with opportunities to play out their life experiences and to develop imaginative play.
- Staff support and develop children's imaginative play related to life experiences.
- Staff ensure that all children have access to a wide range of resources and experiences.

5. Developing Physical Development Through Outdoor Play

- The planning of equipment in the outdoor classroom takes into account all stages of children's physical development.
- There is a good range of equipment to develop children's co-ordination and control skills.
- The resources and equipment encourage a variety of ways of using the body.
- The children are presented with challenges that enable them to discover what they are able to do whilst learning about the limitations of their bodies.
- Children are able to experience a variety of different sized materials and use them in a variety of ways.
- Children are encouraged to use their bodies imaginatively e.g. dance, music and movement.
- Staff ensure that boys and girls have equal access to all areas of physical learning.

6. Developing Creative Learning Through Outdoor Play

- Children are encouraged to represent their ideas imaginatively. There are a range of materials so that they can create 2D and 3D images.
- Children are encouraged to explore colour, shape and texture within natural materials.
- Staff plan for music, movement, dance, singing and drama to take place in the outside area.
- Children have the opportunity to experience a large range of textures and different materials.
- Opportunities are provided for children to develop large-scale work.
- Appropriate resources are available to support large-scale mark making.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored and evaluated on an on- going basis by Nursery staff and reviewed in June 2020 By the Nursery co-coordinator and Principal.