

Outdoor Learning Policy

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Last Updated by: Jennifer Mantville

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Introduction

At St. George Madrid, we feel it is vital to enable all children to use the outside environment as a context for learning as much as possible. Our policy aims at fostering children's love for learning on their journey to become excited, articulate learners. We believe that all children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors.

What is outdoor learning?

Outdoor learning provides a broad range of activities and learning opportunities in the natural environment. In Infants, Outdoor Learning is an integral part of the learning every day, and there is an expectation that children should have access to the outdoors everyday in some form. There are an unlimited amount of possibilities for cross curricular links which maximises a child's learning including Understanding the World, Literacy and Phonics, Numeracy, Expressive Arts and Design, Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

All learning is important whether it is conducted indoors or out, however, many times the outdoor environment can be a more effective and stimulating place to learn than inside of a classroom. There is evidence to support that time spent outdoors brings health and well-being benefits, in addition to providing children opportunities to learn how to evaluate and manage risks. Many times, learning outdoors enables children to use a wide range of skills and abilities that are not always relevant inside of a classroom.

Outdoor learning enables children to develop their enquiry, experimentation, feedback, reflection, communication, problem solving and co-operative learning skills in natural surroundings.

Aims

- To begin to offer our students a high quality outdoor learning experience and provide positive opportunities for active learning in a natural environment.
- To celebrate our outdoor spaces and the rich learning that can take place there.
- To provide a safe and secure environment that children can take risks in.
- To empower children to take ownership of their own learning.
- To increase awareness of the environment and for children to recognise and appreciate the living and natural world around them.

Benefits

- Improves academic achievement
- Provides opportunities for informed learning through play
- Stimulates, inspires and improves motivation
- Raises attainment by promoting and strengthening communication skills and team work
- Has a positive impact on children's behaviour including building confidence
- Develops independence in a wide range of environments
- Promotes the development of children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle
- Promotes contributions to the wider community



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Assessment

Outdoor learning assessment is no different from assessments elsewhere in the school. Whenever possible, activities should allow children to demonstrate “performance of understanding” (Developmental Matters – Infants), and they should be given tasks that show they can build on their existing knowledge and skills to use that they have learnt to:

Generalize, Apply exceptions, Give or show explanations, Make predictions, Evaluate, Find examples and solutions, List strategies

In KS1/KS2 there should be a strong correlation between a planned and integrated curriculum based approach to Outdoor learning which allows the children to demonstrate their skills.

Assessments will be used to inform future learning and determine next steps.

Health and Safety

At St. George, we are fortunate to have wonderful outdoor areas, and we ensure that children can have access to outdoor learning every day. All Learning areas are evaluated daily by our teachers that conduct activities with the children outdoors. We ensure that our staff discuss with our children the dangers, risks and challenges of being outdoors. Our staff are continually watchful, even if we are engrossed in an activity with a particular group of children. Each day, we have staff members who are not conducting active learning, rotate the grounds to ensure the safety of our students.

Role of the teacher and learning assistant

When providing outdoor learning experiences, the role of the teacher and Learning Assistant is to:

- Provide planning and resources for a challenging outdoor activity that is integral with overall planning and meet the curriculum learning goals
- Set up and store equipment safely
- Observe safety and risk measures at all times
- Be an active role model interacting and supporting children’s learning and planned play
- Extend and develop children’s language and communication in their play
- Support all colleagues
- Display a positive attitude to outdoor learning
- Observe and monitor children’s play and learning in the outdoors through continual assessments.