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Holbrook Primary School

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## **Outdoor Learning Policy**

### **Rationale**

The Department for Children, Schools and Families has found that “ there is evidence that when learning outside the classroom, children:

- attain higher levels of knowledge and skills
- improve their physical health and increase their motor abilities
- socialise and interact in new and different ways with their peers and adults
- show improved attention and enhanced self-concept, self-esteem and mental health
- change their environmental behaviours and their values and attitudes.

The outdoors can provide space and freedom for a type of learning that is difficult to replicate indoors. All children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. At Holbrook Primary School we feel it is important to enable children to use the outside environment as a context for learning throughout the year. It is part an important part of the “Every Child Matters” document.

### **Aims**

- To raise the profile of outdoor learning
- To encourage close links with parents and the school in celebrating our outdoor space and the rich learning that can take place within it
- To empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing their minds and bodies to thrive
- To provide a safe and secure environment that they can take risks in
- To encourage children to care for their environment

### **Policy into Practice**

Possibilities for outdoor learning will be considered throughout our planning, using it as a context and a natural resource for learning.

We will:

- ensure that the outdoor space harnesses the special nature of the outdoors, to offer children what the indoors cannot. (This should be the focus for outdoor provision, complementing and extending provision indoors.)
- ensure that our outdoor area and resources within it are flexible and versatile, where children can choose, create, change and be in charge of their play environment.

- support inclusion and meet the needs of individuals, offering a diverse range of play-based experiences.
- enable children to access the garden on a regular basis. In the early years, children should access the outside area as much as possible, throughout the seasons.
- ensure that children enjoy energetic activity outdoors and the feeling of well-being that it brings, including opportunities to develop their large motor skills.
- observe, assess and record outdoor learning, ensuring that there is adequate provision for children to extend their learning.
- plan for outdoor learning with the children to offer experiences which have meaning to them and which are led by the child.
- enable children to work both individually and co-operatively outside.
- enable children to appreciate the beauty of nature; encouraging children to use a variety of natural resources.
- give children the opportunity to find a quiet space to relax.
- encourage children to enjoy and have fun outdoors in many contexts.
- work together (children, staff, parents, community) to create a better environment for all.
- organise and/or provide necessary resources (e.g. Wellington boots, raincoats).
- develop a set of rules through discussion with children. Enable children to use resources safely and to manage and use the space and freedom responsibly.
- help children to take responsibility and care for the outside environment and resources within it.
- encourage children to respect their environment and to care for living things.

### **Health and Safety**

We will support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. It is important to ensure that the outdoor environment offers challenges and teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others. Outdoor learning opportunities will be grasped when available and teachers will assess risk. Risk Assessments will be carried out where appropriate. School Health and Safety Policy will be followed.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Assessment of the children's learning will be valued equally indoors and outdoors and should be part of the same process. Subject leaders will be responsible for monitoring their subject area outdoors.

### **Policy Review**

This policy should be considered alongside other relevant policies, particularly the Learning Out of Doors in the Foundation Stage Policy and PSHE Policy. It will be reviewed by the governing body as part of its schedule of policy review.