



Eastwood at the heart of community with community at heart

**Policy: Outdoor Learning**

**Date Adopted:**  
Spring 2018

**Policy Category**  
Curriculum

**Date for Revision:**  
Autumn 2020

**Definition:**

Children are learning throughout the day and perhaps the most significant learning can take place out of doors. Outdoor learning encompasses all of a child's experiences out of doors- walking to nursery, walks in the local community, trips including Forest School activities and their daily access to outdoor play spaces. The outdoors provides a contrasting environment and context to the indoors, often a better environment for learning and teaching for many of the important skills and attitudes and much of the knowledge that we aim for children to learn whilst at Eastwood.

**Rationale:**

At Eastwood Nursery School & Centre for Children and Families we want children to learn out of doors, be taught out of doors, represent, try out, practise and rehearse out of doors and above all develop through outdoor experiences.

We want children to be adventurous, to take risks, enjoy their childhood and to not be cosseted. We want them to be safe and treat others with respect and decency and we think that rough and tumble play within parameters can promote this when this is what children want to do.

Our policy is to ensure that high standards of learning, teaching, enjoyment and safety are maintained throughout the day and throughout the year so that all children will make good rates of progress, become healthier and be motivated through memorable first hand experiences

**Aims:**

To provide a wide range of contrasting sensory experiences for children to enrich their learning- we cannot create these sensory experiences inside

To provide a context in which children learn from the transformations that continually occur outside throughout the day, the seasons and minute by minute as changes take place

To provide a contrasting scale for learning- children can work on a larger scale, can move faster, climb higher, make more noise, see further and go further when they are outside

To enable children to learn from and about the natural world around them and to understand their place in the built and natural environment and their impact on it

**Objectives:**

Eastwood should provide: -

- Continual assessment of risks so that children are safe and their wellbeing will not be impaired through outdoor learning
- Daily access to the outdoor learning areas- as far as possible for the majority of sessions and on a free flow basis throughout the year
- All weather access to learning out of doors so cold, heat, rain, sun and (hopefully) snow so children can learn about and from the weather

- An environment that maximises on the unique qualities of the outdoors- scale, sensory and capacity for transformations
- Planning, observation, assessment and evaluation that focuses on the unique qualities of outdoor learning (not just putting outside the same activities as inside)
- Resources for outdoor learning of the same or better standard than those provided inside
- Opportunities and experiences that will promote characteristics of learning- helping children be active, become deeply involved, create and think critically, speculate, evaluate and observe carefully
- Opportunities for learning stories that can develop unhindered over the day, over several days and wherever possible over weeks
- An learning environment that is predictable (as far as this can be achieved out of doors) so children know before they go out that they will be able to access certain equipment everyday and know where to find resources that will enable them to develop their learning story
- Records of learning out of doors to share with children e.g. videos, photographs, artefacts for display, constructions that are kept safe for several days
- A simple and open-ended environment that requires limited daily setting up but careful maintenance of stocks, resources and tools.

We believe that all children should have access to learning out of doors regardless of age, level of development or impairment. If children are well enough to be at nursery then they are well enough to learn out of doors if and when they wish to. When choosing Eastwood, parents should be made aware that learning out of doors is at the heart of provision and that we need them to help by

- Understanding that fresh air in all weather improves health rather than being detrimental
- Following the Nursery Dress Code so that their child is dressed suitably for active outdoor learning every day
- Providing a waterproof coat with a hood and welly boots so children can be outside in the rain
- Understanding that the unique qualities of outdoor learning mean that children are likely to get sandy and dirty

## **Standards**

### Learning and Teaching

- Generally there should be one, focused and well planned adult-led activity taking place at any one time that designed to maximise on the potential of the outdoor area. This is likely to be a STEAM or STEM activity
- Continuous provision should be reliable and provide plenty of opportunity for children to initiate learning across the curriculum throughout the session
- Planning and communication should help ensure that practitioners work together to maintain learning opportunities, structured play settings and activities throughout the day- so learning doesn't deteriorate because the practitioner initiating it has gone inside.
- There must be an effective plan for the outdoor area- adults should be clear as the learning intentions of what has been set out and the learning opportunities available through child-initiated learning
- Standards of teaching- vocabulary, demonstrations, questioning, preparation and attention to the progress of each individual participating child should be to the same standard as any teaching that takes place inside

### Staying safe

- Outdoor areas must be safe. Hazards must be removed or areas cordoned off or children's attention should be drawn to the hazard so they can take responsibility (e.g. stinging nettles, icy patches, bees).
- Areas should only be cordoned off and access restricted as a temporary measure and only because of a hazard.
- Outdoor areas must be suitably staffed so that ratios follow EYFS guidelines and children won't come to harm without an adult becoming aware quickly- however the outdoor area is a learning

space- adults must find an appropriate balance between supervision and teaching

- A first aid kit must be stored outside and easily available or taken on outings
- Risk assessments are required for outings and procedures in place to allow for emergencies

#### Learning environment

- Any adult out of doors is expected to take responsibility for the standard of the environment around them and take decisive action to deal with hazards and reasonable action to ensure that the environment around them is attractive and equipped
- Resources set up or taken outside must be at least as good as those provided inside. Poor quality resources should be thrown away
- The outdoor learning environment must be maintained- water should be fresh and replenished frequently, mark making tools must work, paper trays should have paper in them and sand pits should have a suitable amount of sand
- Children must be involved in developing and maintaining the outdoor areas- they should be centrally involved in gardening, tidying, building dens and decision making
- The outdoor area should be fun and promoting deep levels of involvement and learning across the curriculum. If it isn't then this needs to be attended to through evaluation and planning

#### **Procedures**

All staff teams who will be involved in supporting learning and teaching out of doors must be involved in and represented in teams that undertake: -

- Evaluation of the learning that has taken place- what skills and knowledge were developing
- Identification of centres of interest that occurred, learning stories that unfolded and schemas that were apparent in the session (ideally at story time / tea time when a small group of practitioners) which will inform planning for the following day
- Planning for the next day- writing this up in simple terms with a focus on the learning intention
- Pulling resources together (wherever possible the day before)
- Setting up and maintaining continuous provision / resetting at lunch times
- Risk assessment at the beginning of the session- identifying what is risky and needs to be managed and what needs to be removed or changed

**Written By :** Headteacher and Senior Teacher

**Headteacher's Signature:**

**Chair of Governors:**

**Date: Spring 2018**

Outdoor Learning at Eastwood- Provision Map

Adult focused learning STEAM / STEM	Examples of learning intentions / opportunities	Examples of activities
Science	Observation; identifying change; making predictions; describing; developing an explanation; testing; evaluating; sorting; caring for living things; identifying differences; making connections;	Gardening Looking for minibeasts / other animals Pond-dipping Weather station Washing and drying Categorising materials Hoisting and transporting sand Caring for living things- feeding birds
Technology	Skills using a range of tools; using equipment to measure; using equipment to record observations; programming; controlling; testing out; identifying source materials;	Woodwork Hammering in nails Sawing – pieces of wood and branches Using programmable and remote control devices Photography Making sound and video recordings Using mapping software / apps Accessing the internet to support learning
Engineering	Designing; making; improving; fixing; attaching; Measuring; comparing; observing (perimeter, circumference, length, diameter (thickness), height, angle, time, weight, volume, capacity selecting materials, testing; suggesting; evaluating;	Den building Heuristic play with outdoor resources Making a rain shelter Making kites Setting up equipment so water flows from one place to another Making rafts Making imaginary play settings- shops, vehicles
Maths	Measuring; comparing; observing (perimeter, circumference, length, diameter (thickness), height, angle, time, weight, volume, capacity Exploring ordinal numbers Exploring cardinal numbers and quantity; scoring; tallying; Calculation Sorting; data handling	Mapping the area or a walk Large scale games Measuring and comparing distances Making obstacle courses Comparing, categorising and measuring

Continuous provision	Examples of learning outcomes / opportunities / possibilities / prompt card text	Examples of provision
Movement	Balancing, hopping, manoeuvring, overcoming obstacles, going over, clambering, scrambling, sliding, crawling, squeezing through, squeezing under, taking care, creeping, stomping, running jogging, cycling, helping	Climbing A frames; planks; ladders; slides Obstacle courses Ball games- football / netball / rugby inspired Wheeled ride on vehicles Wheeled carts and barrows
Natural and heuristic play	Reflecting, observing, planning, designing, touching and feeling, investigating, evaluating, exploring, comparing, covering, enclosing, rotating	Quiet spaces Logs, pine cones, pebbles, leaves, sticks, conkers, Boxes Sheets of fabric Rope
Mark making & painting	Long marks, rotating marks, Representing Forming letters and linking to sounds Recording what is seen Recording scores and results Making labels and notices	Chalk in hand Chalk on sticks Water buckets and large brushes White boards and pens Charcoal (home made)
Sand	Shoveling, spooning, transporting, hoisting, heaving, sprinkling, spreading, using imagination, making up stories; interacting	Buckets, containers, very large buckets, boxes Spades, scoops, shovels, rakes, trowels Ropes and pulleys
Water	Pouring, predicting, channelling, exploring volume, capacity, change, temperature, flotation, gravity, pressure	Low level and high level with gutters Water flow set up Pipes, funnels Clean containers Water tray on the floor Water in a tough spot with boats or play creatures Making huge bubbles
Small world play	Representing, storying, imagining, describing; developing social play; communicating; listening; developing attention	Play people Cars, ramps, garage, roadway, gutter Natural materials, logs, herbs, play houses
Enactive representation play	Representing, rehearsing, speaking, listening,	Bird hides set up as shops

	collaborating	Bird hides set up as a house Mud kitchen Large boxes Large pieces of fabric or tarps
Music	Participating in musical creation Banging; blowing; tapping; Creating patterns in sound Communicating through sound Developing awareness of sound; discriminating; describing	Music garden (open and ready) Plenty of beaters Manufactured musical instruments Tubes Stage Recorded music
Construction	Designing; making; finding the correct pieces; Having a goal in mind Fine motor skills Using tools	Construction kits set out as structured play Mobilo Duplo Community hollow blocks Community Outlast large construction set
Literacy	Comprehension of story Sequencing Using books as a source of information Enjoying retelling familiar stories Identifying and recognising own name Identifying other children's names Making marks in a range of contexts Communication through pictures, symbols and text	Books relating to outdoor play- sense of place (e.g. A bit lost; Shh We Have a Plan; I Want my Hat; Rosie's Walk; Bear Hunt) Reference books, creatures, plants, birds, Core book set with cushions and communication-friendly space Name card sets Clipboards Sharpened pencils, good crayons, pens with lids Small supply of good paper Homemade notebooks
Clay	Trajectory schema Fine and gross motor development Using tools and developing mastery Observing and explaining change Experiential / sensory aspects	Clay by itself Water Rolling pins and wooden surfaces Pressing-in tools Mallets
Food and drink	Health and body awareness Becoming aware of hygiene and self care	Fresh water, jugs, cups, washing up bowl or crate Fruit Warm water in flask herbs, peppermint, lemons, oranges Warm milk in flask

Example provision map (will be adapted each term or half term)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development		Physical Development	Communication & Language		
<p>Rough and tumble play Risk-taking activities Ball games- football / netball / rugby inspired Wheeled ride on vehicles Wheeled carts and barrows Opportunities to negotiate and take turns</p>		<p>Climbing A frames; planks; ladders; slides Obstacle courses Fresh water, jugs, cups, washing up bowl or crate Fruit; Warm water in flask herbs, peppermint, lemons, oranges; Warm milk in flask Space and support for ring games Mark making (see literacy)</p>	<p>Bird hides set up as shops Bird hides set up as a house Mud kitchen Large boxes Large pieces of fabric or tarps Developing communication friendly spaces Ring games</p>		
Events and festivals	Date	<b>Outdoor Provision Map</b>		<p>Songs and Rhymes Outdoor ring games: -</p>	
<p>Stories and books Books relating to outdoor play- sense of place (e.g. A bit lost; Shh We Have a Plan; I Want my Hat; Rosie's Walk; Bear Hunt) Reference books, creatures, plants, birds, Core book set with cushions and communication-friendly space</p>			<p>ICT resources Using programmable and remote control devices; Photography; Making sound and video recordings; Using mapping software / apps Accessing the internet to support learning</p>		
Literacy		Mathematics	Understanding the World		Expressive Arts and Design
<p>Name card sets Clipboards Sharpened pencils, good crayons, pens with lids Small supply of good paper Homemade notebooks Good quality books that relate to outdoor play and environment in baskets</p>		<p>Mapping the area or a walk Large scale games Measuring and comparing distances Making obstacle courses Comparing, categorising and measuring Games Tallying and scoring</p>	<p>Gardening Looking for minibeasts / other animals Pond-dipping; Weather station Washing and drying Categorising materials Hoisting and transporting sand Caring for living things- feeding birds See ICT</p>		<p>Chalk in hand; Chalk on sticks Water buckets and large brushes Paint and large surfaces White boards and pens Charcoal (home made) Play people Cars, ramps, garage, roadway, gutter Natural materials, logs, herbs, play houses</p>
Forest School		Development Movement Play	Heuristic Play		Sounds of Intent
<p>Den building Heuristic play with outdoor resources Making a rain shelter Making kites Setting up equipment so water flows</p>		<p>Balancing, hopping, manoeuvring, overcoming obstacles, going over, clambering, scrambling, sliding, crawling, squeezing through, squeezing under, taking care, creeping, stomping, running jogging, cycling, helping</p>	<p>Quiet spaces Logs, pine cones, pebbles, leaves, sticks, conkers, Boxes Sheets of fabric Rope</p>		<p>Music garden (opened and ready) Plenty of beaters Manufactured musical instruments (taken in at night); Tubes Stage; Recorded music; recording</p>

## Example Duty Rota for outdoors

### **Outdoor Duty Team Responsibility**

The outdoor team for the week collectively lead the learning but are not the only people working in the outdoor area- their work is predominantly before the children arrive and after the children have gone in

Plan the set up for the day- making reference to the provision map and the focused learning

Set up the outdoor area so it is ready for the children and provides opportunities for them to develop it further

Carry out a risk assessment / visual check and record this. Alert Headteacher to any defects

Evaluate the learning that has taken place to inform the planning for the next day or following week (during the end of the day session when the children have gone in for the story time

Reporting back to class team so that the key persons have an overview of what went well and next steps for the outdoor area and what focused activity will take place the next day

### **Everyone's Responsibility**

Supporting learning and teaching out of doors at various points during the day

Keeping children safe whilst outside

Supporting children's learning contingently- responding and developing play and learning in response to what children do

Re-setting areas to keep the outdoor area attractive

Tidy up or cover up (e.g. with tarpaulins) at the end of the day

Observations of key group children whilst outside

Key short 'post it' type observations to inform the Outdoor Duty Team- stored at the planning area

### **Duty Rota**

Team / week				
A / week 1	ME	SJS		SB
B / week 2	EM	JK	TJ	
C / week 3	KP	HH	LB	VF
D / week 4	IA		MPG	ER/CF

## **Outdoor Area Daily Evaluation and Plan**

Please use incidental and in depth observation evidence from the session to evaluate the learning and what children initiated out of doors.  
Think about characteristics of learning- playing; exploring; being active; being deeply involved; creativity; critical thinking

**What happened today?**

**Date.....**

### **Next steps**

Please identify how the plan will be developed tomorrow building on the children's interests and helping learning stories to unfold over extended periods  
Think what the learning intention will be for the focused activity and possible learning outcomes for the rest of the set up  
Allow children space to develop the outdoor play themselves

**Outdoor Area Plan**

**Date.....**

**Outdoor Incidental Observation**  
Which children were involved?

What happened?

Who is making this observation?

Date and time....

**Outdoor Incidental Observation**  
Which children were involved?

What happened?

Who is making this observation?

Date and time....

Significant learning prompts

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity &amp; critical thinking</li> <li>• Active learning</li> <li>• Playing &amp; exploring</li> <li>• Schema</li> <li>• Trajectory / enveloping / transporting / up &amp; down etc</li> <li>• Personal target</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSED</li> <li>• PD</li> <li>• CL</li> <li>• Literacy</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> <li>• Understanding the world</li> <li>• Expressive arts and design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive feelings &amp; behaviour</li> <li>• People &amp; communities</li> <li>• Learning through movement</li> <li>• STEM</li> <li>• Voice of the Child</li> </ul>
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Possible next steps

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*Please clip this incidental observation up for the outdoor duty team*  
*Observations should be collected back at the end of the week for filing in the relevant assessment folder*



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*Observations should be collected back at the end of the week for filing in the relevant assessment folder*

