

Sacred Heart Outdoor Play Policy

At Sacred Heart, we value the outdoors as much as the indoors. Children have access to the outdoor area in Nursery and Reception in both the morning and afternoon as well as throughout lunch time. Our outdoor spaces are viewed as the third classroom. Due to the area in which we are situated and the makeup of our school pupils we understand that many of our pupils will not have regular access to a sufficient outdoor space when they are at home. Because of this, we promote being outside in all weathers and provide appropriate overalls and wellingtons for our children to use.

Our belief is that everything outdoors should be larger and messier to promote exploration of our natural world and giving children space to problem solve and investigate in bigger areas. This is then supported by meaningful interactions with adults who extend children's learning, offering thought provoking conversations and ideas to support their thinking.

Our outdoor areas are set up to allow for transportation of materials to support children's play and well labelled to encourage independence when children are collecting items or putting them away. We believe our outdoor environment should be more fluid than the indoor environment and so children are encouraged to return to large building projects or play in the afternoon or next day. Adults provide children with the opportunity to decide if they would like to continue working on projects the next day.

Adult interaction is key, both indoors and outdoors. Adults support children's thinking and inquiry through providing a well-stocked and varied continuous provision with enhancements added daily. Adults are encouraged to enter into children's play or initiate a play scenario with more reluctant children through engagement, therefore scaffolding and extending their play, this is known as play partnering.

Cold and wet weather should not hinder children's accessibility to the outdoor environment, wellingtons and overalls are provided for the mud gardens and can also be used during the wet weather. Children should experience the different types of weather and how to adapt and make changes alongside this. Water is

provided all year round with adaptations to the way it is explored and used in the colder winter months.

<u>In Nursery all children will have outside daily access to:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-climbing apparatus-sand-water on a large scale-small world play-junk modelling-musical instruments-large block play-vertical mark making-three wheeled bikes-outdoor reading-natural world, investigating materials-mud garden	<u>In Reception all children will have daily access to:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-climbing apparatus-physical development equipment to promote gross motor skills-sand-water on a large scale-large block play-construction using real world items-vertical & large scale mark making-outdoor reading-natural world, investigating materials-musical instruments
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Adult expectations outside:

- supporting interactions
- providing thought provoking conversations and ideas e.g. 'I wonder...'
- modelling care and proper use of equipment
- observing play to further support children's development
- adult's role is much more than a supervisory role, interacting with children is key

Wet play expectations:

Unless torrential or very heavy rain, children should still have access to all of the outdoor area – including areas outside of the shelter remit. To protect uniform and shoes, wellington boots and overalls should be worn over coats. These will be provided by Sacred Heart, but parents, are, of course, welcome to bring in their own to use in school.

Outdoor play at Sacred Heart is;

Larger, messier and louder!

