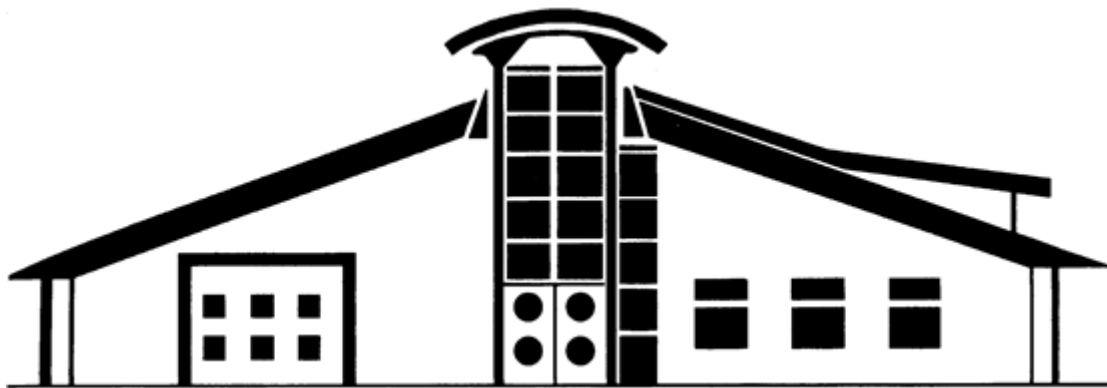




HOLMESDALE COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL



LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM POLICY

Agreed by Staff January 2022

Agreed by Governor January 2022

Review due..... January 2025

Outdoor Learning Policy

Learning Outside the Classroom Policy

Outdoor learning is powerful, motivating and holistic. It can provide a dramatic contrast to the indoor classroom. It can have a positive impact on behaviour as well as tapping into the learning styles of the more kinaesthetic learner. Through skilled teaching, outdoor experiences readily stimulate a child's curiosity, personal growth and can lead to breakthroughs in learning.

It promotes the development of their natural sense of enquiry, the drive to explore, experiment, solve problems through trial and error and reflect on what they discover.

Primarily we believe outdoor learning has a positive impact on the children's physical and emotional well-being, their ability to communicate and negotiate with others and to cooperate together in activities and projects they become involved in.

Aims

- to raise the profile of Outdoor Learning
- all children will participate in a range of outdoor experiences to support their learning and development across the curriculum
- to promote and strengthen social and communication skills while working with peers and adults
- that children will gain the confidence to accept challenges, manage risks and yet to be aware of their own safety and the safety of other people
- to develop self-esteem and feel valued for their own contributions
- to increase the children's awareness and appreciation of living things and the natural world and to recognise their role in learning to respect and care for the outdoor environment
- that teachers embed outdoor learning in the curriculum so that learning in the outdoor environment becomes a reality for all children

Benefits of Outdoor Learning:

- Enables children to develop confidence in their own abilities, and challenge themselves which impacts positively upon their attitudes and self-perceptions.
- Contributes towards creating independent learners who develop a sense of pride in their achievements.
- Motivates boys to engage more readily in their learning.
- Contributes towards their understanding of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle.
- Can have a positive impact on the children's social, emotional and behavioural development.
- Links can be made to all areas of the curriculum and therefore Outdoor Learning should be incorporated into planning across all year groups.
- The children witness the impact our actions can have on the outdoor environment and begin to develop a sense of understanding and responsibility to look after the school grounds and the wider community.

EYFS

Outdoor learning is an integral part of the day in EYFS. Children have free access during most of the sessions, with a range of free flow and planned activities that are cross curricular. Planning incorporates the children's current needs and interests and resources are modified or added to enhance their learning. Children can choose from a wide range of resources and activities, such as, climbing and balancing apparatus, bats and balls, ride on and push along toys, a stage and musical instruments, a range of construction equipment including den building, natural materials including the mud kitchen. They have free access to large scale painting, chalking, model making and writing equipment. They also have the opportunity to plant and grow flowers and vegetables. Children wear wellies and appropriate protective clothing where appropriate.

Woodland Explorers

The children in Reception go to Woodland Explorers once a fortnight. The sessions are planned following the philosophy of Forest Schools which aim to promote a range of skills and knowledge that will encourage them to:

- be independent in self-care.
- use tools and appropriately and safely.
- negotiate with their peers by listening to each-others ideas and working cooperatively together.
- develop their own ideas and creativity using natural resources.
- have the confidence and perseverance to learn through trial and error without a sense of failure.
- develop independence and sense of self-esteem in what they can do.
- demonstrate the skills and learning they have been taught during independent tasks.
- respect the woodland and come to understand how they can play a role in preservation and maintenance of their school woodland and the wider environment.
- learn the woodland rules of how to keep themselves and others safe during their outdoor.

Key Stage One

From March 2021, all classes across KS1 have weekly allocated time in the Woodland. These sessions build on the experiences stated during the Woodland Explorer sessions the children attended throughout their time in the Early Years.

Year 1

In September 2021, our Year 1 children continue to develop their learning opportunities throughout the development of continuous outdoor provision which builds on the foundations from the skills developed within their time in the EY, there are frequent opportunities for them to continue to learn outdoors in Year One. Good quality learning in the outdoor classroom leads to a deeper understanding of concepts that span across the curriculum and which are frequently difficult to teach effectively using indoor classroom methods alone.

- Opportunities are sought across the curriculum to allow children to learn outdoors this includes using the facilities listed in **Resourcing** below.

- Planning in the outdoor environment enables the children to have hands on, real experiences that help to make their learning more meaningful. The activities are motivating and exciting will allow the children to take responsibility for their learning which leads to a deeper level of understanding.

School Lunchtime / Outdoor play

Reception, and Key Stage One children have access to the main playground, the meadow, trim trail and the pathways in the woodland at lunchtimes and our Year 2 children have an outdoor break mid-morning.

School Values

We are a values based school and outdoor learning is an essential resource that helps to embed these values as the children move up through the school.

Values list

September	Friendship	Friends know how to look after each other through good and bad times
October	Perseverance	Always doing our best and not giving up
November	Respect	Means valuing myself, other people and our environment
December	Appreciation	Knowing what other people do for us and how to thank them. It means showing that you are thankful
January	Co-operation	Working together and helping one another
February	Patience	Staying calm and waiting until your turn comes around
March	Trust	You can be relied on to do the right thing
April	Tolerance	Is accepting others, even when they make mistakes. Tolerance is appreciating our differences
May	Caring	Looking after ourselves and others and it means looking after the world around us

June	Responsibility	You can be in charge of yourself, other people or things, and you are trusted to do the right thing
July	Courage	Means facing what you might be worried about or afraid of

The Adult's Role

Observation of where the children are at developmentally and what their current interests are is key to facilitating the learning environment. Teachers take this into account when planning for both indoor and outdoor learning and one can complement the other.

Staff support and extend learning using a range of strategies:

- Interact with the children by making comments and asking open questions about their learning to help them think about strategies they use.
- Allow children to test their ideas and encourage them to persevere with a task to see it through. Sometimes offer suggestions if children are struggling but taking care not to interfere.
- Observe the children's movements and interactions and sensitively support children who may find interacting with others a challenge.
- Model different skills required to carry out a wide range of activities such as ball games or using equipment, tools and resources to build models.
- Develop their sense of enquiry and provide and model the use of resources that will motivate them further such as bug viewers, magnifiers, information books.
- Join the children in games and activities taking care not to disrupt their ideas.
- Model how to act in role as a eg. a firefighter or a character from a story.
- Praise children for their achievements

See Healthy and Safety section below for risk assessment checks and safety checks on resources.

Outdoor duties on weekly timetable.

The facilities at Holmesdale Infant School include:

The woodland which includes a base camp to set off the learning, the log pile, a digging area, resources for den building.

The pond (Fenced and gated. Accessible for learning time)

The meadow

Eco garden

Quiet garden

Garden tools

Trim trail

Static Wooden train

Tools and equipment

Collection Trays

Marine viewers

Nets

Magnifiers

Bug viewers

Binoculars

Aquariums

Wormery

Trowels

Forks

Butterfly farm

Fauna and flora information books and identification cards

EYFS Outdoor Classroom

- Sand with trolley of tools and resources from which children self-select
- Water trays with self-select trolley
- Mud kitchen, selection of tools and resources to 'cook' with. Wellingtons and aprons provided
- Additional resources such as guttering, pipes, small world toys, seashore articles, ice blocks etc. to enhance / extend thinking and imagination
- Ride on and push along toys and safety helmets
- Role play – resources to follow interest eg in space, stories, people who help us.
- Additional resources for children to create their own resources (deconstructed role play) including large pieces of fabric, camouflage netting, sticks and logs
- The Stage, dressing up clothes and different fabrics to create their own costume
- Outdoor CD player musical instruments and resources to improvise and explore sounds, scarves and ribbon sticks
- Painting easel, large scale painting
- Writing area- self-select drawers include drawing and writing tools, letter and word cards, number lines, clip board, selection of paper, folded paper, envelopes etc. Writing boxes to transport and use in other outdoor areas.
- Large chalk board
- Number lines, clock, timers, measuring tools
- Range of construction kits both large and small

- Cushions and selection of books under sheltered area
- Investigation tray to explore and use materials such as, sticks, pebbles, shells,
- Spot tray investigation table to develop fine motor skills and engage curiosity. Eg Tapping peg into pumpkin using a hammer or finding out what happens to two coloured ice blocks
- Climbing and balancing apparatus including A frame, crates, planks, large blocks, tyres
- Bats, balls, quoits,
- Parachute
- Gardening equipment

The children continue to have access to outdoor learning opportunities as they move through the school. Activities that have been planned to develop independence and progression in their learning. Observations of children's learning are recorded on post its, photographs, examples of children's work. These are collated in the children's individual learning journals and topic books the information gathered is used to assess where the children are at and plan next steps for learning.

Evaluations during team meeting to discuss what has been successful and what needs further practise or how can we adapt learning to promote learning and development.

Sharing Information and Parent Involvement

Parents receive information in their induction pack before their child starts school which includes provision made for Outdoor Learning. This politely requires that parents ensure their children have appropriate clothing for variable weather conditions. Parents are informed about after school activities, and outings via Newsletters and Notices and Reminders. Parental permission and consent is required for children to attend any outings beyond the school grounds.

We value the support of parents to help with gardening. The garden is equipped with storage for tools and there are beds for growing fruit and vegetables. We also invite parents to help us maintain the outdoor school environment during our Spruce Up Saturdays which run two or three times a year. This can include gardening, clearing and maintaining the pond area and the woodland.

Health and safety

Risk assessments of all outdoor areas are carried out daily during the school year and updated annually. See risk assessments attached

Playground Risk Assessment

Trim Trail Risk Assessment

Early Years Outdoor Area Risk Assessment

Outdoor Learning Risk Assessment

Woodland Risk Assessment

Pond

All equipment must be checked as part of the risk assessment. Children are to be supervised at all times with correct adult/child ratio. Apparatus is age appropriate. Rotas and timetables clarify which members of staff are responsible for specific outdoor areas. See playground rotas for morning break and lunchtime play. See EYFS class timetables.

Any equipment that is found to pose an additional risk must be removed and stored in a safe place out of the reach of children

Early Years and Year One Outdoor Classrooms

A Risk Assessment is carried out by a member of each team every day to monitor the safety of climbing apparatus, slippery surfaces, broken or damaged equipment or any vegetation that would pose a risk to the children's safety. Any broken or damaged equipment or vegetation is removed by the premises manager before the children come into school. Occasionally fox or cat faeces will need removing prior to the children coming into school.

- All children can reach learning and play materials or equipment without having to stretch or clamber in an unsafe way.
- Support and teach children to carry and store play materials safely.
- The environment is organised to allow children to make choices, offer challenges and with support teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others in their exploration and learning.

The Woodland

A risk assessment is carried by the premises manager before the children arrive at school to check for fallen branches or trees, animal faeces, broken fences, boundaries, intrusion to the premises. The premises manager will inform teaching staff if it is unsafe and would carry out the necessary action.

☐ Woodland Explorers

- ☐ As part of their learning the children learn and recap The Woodland Rules before setting off on their learning adventure. They are told not to pick and growing vegetation. They are told not to put their fingers in their mouths and have to wash their hands on return to school after each session. They know we use walking feet in the woodland to avoid trip hazards. The woodland is a natural environment where some vegetation is potentially a hazard. The children are taught about the dangers Eg of berries, ivy, fungi and nettles very early in the year and this is included when we recap our rules each week. They quickly learn that some parts of the natural world can pose a danger and know they must not consume any of these plants and that they must wash their hands as instructed.

Whole School

All practitioners should be aware of Health and Safety procedures. Trained first aiders know and understand their responsibilities. Teachers are notified by lunchtime staff of any incidents or injuries and how these were managed. Minor head injuries are recorded and a yellow slip is given to the class teacher responsible for the injured child. She /he is responsible for sharing this with the parent at the end of the day. For serious injuries see Healthy and Safety Policy. Keeping parents/carers informed will help strengthen the schools relationship with them and can help a particularly protective parent/carer to trust that their child will be safe in our care.

Everyone should be clear about emergency procedures. Deal with the situation calmly and quietly, and follow the school's health and safety policy. Record the incident as soon as possible, gathering information from everyone who witnessed it. When the situation has been resolved, evaluate what happened and why. Were all your identified safety provisions in place? Do you need to put in place new controls? If appropriate, talk about the incident with the children. What have they learned from the incident? What will they do in future to avoid this happening to them?

Suitable clothing

All children are expected to wear coats, in cold and wet weather conditions. In extremely cold weather they are encouraged to wear hats and gloves. If it has been decided the outdoor area or any part of the outdoor area is thought to be a danger to the children's safety eg icy conditions the children stay indoors or are only allowed access to areas that are gritted and free of ice. The children are able to go out in the rain with waterproof coats unless it is particularly heavy and persistent. In these circumstances EYFS children and Year One children are able to use a covered outdoor area.

Children asked to bring named sunhats during the summer months or during a hot weather spell. Parents are asked to apply sun-cream before the children come into school. All children have their own water bottle and have access to it most of the time. There are water fountains for children to access during playtime when teaching staff may not be in the classrooms.

Reception children are provided with long waterproof trousers during Woodland Explorers. They bring their own wellingtons boots and coats for these sessions. If a child forgets to bring wellingtons we are able to provide these from our stock. The woodland is closed to the whole school during high winds and thunderstorms.

On-site Curriculum enrichments

During the child's time at our school, there will be sporting activities, cooking, workshops and theatre/music group performances etc. that are available to all children and enrich the curriculum and the child's learning and experiences.

External Visits

Each year group has a planned programme of educational visits which complement the learning experiences and objectives set out in the National Curriculum or the Foundation Stage Curriculum. These visits aim to extend learning through real, hands on experiences that stimulate their curiosity and increase their motivation learn and discover. A risk assessment is carried out for each outing including consideration of adult/ child ratios and first aid. Suitable transport and insurance are organised where necessary.

Equality and inclusion

Support staff work with the class teacher, SENCo and appropriate outside agencies to ensure individual children with specific needs and disabilities have access to the outdoor learning environment including the woodland, the pond and outings.

See- Equality Policy

See- SEND and Disability Policy

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring of teaching and learning outside the classroom and in the outdoor environment is carried out through:

Learning walks

Teacher observations /assessments

Monitoring planning and evaluations in all year groups

Professional development to enable staff to feel confident developing the expertise or knowledge base to adapt their practice to include opportunities for learning beyond the confines of the classroom.

This policy should be considered alongside other relevant policies, particularly the PSHE, Healthy and Safety, Equality, Disability and Inclusion, Behaviour