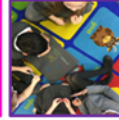


Commitment
Respect
Kindness



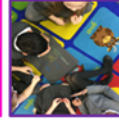
St James' Primary School

Taking Learning Outdoors Policy



Our Tree is Different, We Grow Stars

September 2025



St James' Primary School Taking Learning Outdoors Policy

Aims and Objectives

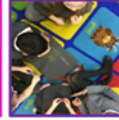
At St James' Primary School, we are beginning our journey into outdoor learning with a clear vision: to enhance child development, support mental health and wellbeing, foster deeper connections with nature, and create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment.

Our aim is to provide meaningful outdoor experiences that support learning across all curriculum areas, in line with the **Curriculum for Excellence**, which encourages children to become **successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors** through a broad range of learning contexts.

We strive to:

- Create opportunities for pupils to explore, investigate, problem-solve and express creativity in outdoor settings.
- Support the development of gross motor skills through active outdoor play and learning.
- Encourage environmental stewardship and a sense of responsibility.
- Promote teamwork and independent learning.
- Enhance personal and social development.
- Integrate outdoor learning into curriculum planning.
- Ensure safe and enjoyable outdoor experiences through effective planning and risk assessment.
- Strengthen learning in all subject areas, with particular emphasis on numeracy, science, and health and wellbeing.

Curriculum Links



Outdoor learning is embedded within the **Curriculum for Excellence** as a vital context for learning. It offers opportunities for interdisciplinary learning, experiential engagement, and real-world application of knowledge. The CfE guidance highlights that outdoor learning can be **motivating, exciting, relevant, and accessible**, and should be a regular part of every child's educational journey.

We also aim to develop key **metaskills** through outdoor learning:

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Critical Thinking
- Curiosity
- Creativity
- Organisation and Planning

Research-Informed Benefits

Recent studies show that outdoor learning:

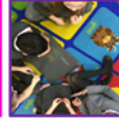
- Improves **cognitive development**, attention, and academic performance.
- Reduces **stress and anxiety**, and supports emotional regulation.
- Enhances **physical health** through active engagement.
- Builds **resilience**, social skills, and a sense of belonging.

Even short periods of outdoor time have been shown to yield significant benefits, therefore at St James' we have allocated each class a 50min slot of 'Taking Learning Outdoors' for the school session 2025-2026. This will be carried out by staff delivering Non Class Contact Time.

Clothing and Preparation

To ensure pupils are ready to learn outdoors:

- Children should come to school dressed appropriately for the weather. This includes warm layers, waterproof jackets, and suitable footwear.



- A **spare change of clothes**, including socks and pants, should be kept in school.
- The school will provide waterproof ponchos, and parents may also supply additional waterproofs/wellington boots.
- Staff will check pupils are appropriately dressed before any outdoor activity.

Weather Considerations

Outdoor learning will take place in most weather conditions, with exceptions made for **adverse or extreme weather**. Staff will use professional judgement to limit time outdoors when necessary, ensuring pupil safety and comfort.

Locations and Resources

Outdoor learning will occur:

- Within the school grounds.
- In the local community, where appropriate.

Staff will plan activities, identify necessary resources, and ensure adequate space and supervision.

Health and Safety

All outdoor learning activities will be planned in accordance with the school's **Health and Safety Policy**. Risk assessments will be conducted, and pupils will be taught to manage risks appropriately. Staff will model safe use of tools and equipment and intervene when necessary.

Monitoring and Review

Outdoor learning will be monitored to ensure it supports curriculum delivery and pupil development. Staff will reflect on practice and adapt plans to meet the needs of learners. Professional development opportunities will be provided to build staff confidence and competence in outdoor education.