



John Scottus Pre-School

Outdoor Play

This policy will be available to view and examine by all members of the school community: Parents, Staff, Board of Management and Trustees. They will be available for inspection in the Pre-school classroom in Old Conna, Ferndale Rd, Rathmichael Co Dublin and on our School website.

Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 ([Síolta Standard 3: Parents/guardians and Families](#), [Síolta Standard 7: Curriculum](#), [Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare](#), [Síolta Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation](#)) ([National Standard 1: Information](#), [National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians](#), [National Standard 5: Organisation and Management](#), [National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning](#), [National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being](#)).

Statement of Intent:

Outdoor play is an extremely integral part of our daily curriculum at our Pre-School. Children enjoy outdoor-play every day. Our outdoor programme aims to enhance gross motor skills, co-ordination, balance, and body awareness. It also gives children opportunities to socialise freely and use imagination and initiative as well as meeting specific curriculum goals.

Outdoor Area:

The outdoor area consists of:

- Garden
- Forest area

Policy and Procedure:

A well planned environment provides opportunities for children to seek new challenges as they master old ones.

Close observation is essential in order to assess children's ability and to ensure appropriate planning and continuity for the outdoor curriculum. Staff will be vigilant about supervising children outdoors. Outdoor time is used to engage children in learning activities and for free-play. During free-play the adult is there to supervise and lead garden games or play and ensure that the children are in no danger to themselves or their peers.

Outdoor time is an extension of indoor activities therefore sitting should be kept to an absolute minimum.

- Staff should ensure that their presence and position in the outdoor play area allows that all areas of the outdoor area are under constant supervision and that all children are in the sight of at least one member of staff, at all times.
- The outdoor play area must be checked by a member of staff for safety before any children use the outdoor play area. (Risk Assessment)
- Staff **must engage** with the children during the outdoor play time.
- Curriculum planning should be used outdoors as well as indoors.
- Children should not be allowed to interfere with the gate in the outside area.

Clothing:

It is important that children are dressed appropriately for outdoor activity. Parents are asked to ensure their children have appropriate rain gear and wellies.

Sun Safety:

We request that parents/guardians:

- Apply sun cream to their child/children before they attend as in the first instance it is the responsibility of the parent to apply sun cream to their child/children.
- If necessary put sun cream in the child's bag and request the staff member to apply the sun cream, every effort will be made by the staff member to do this and you will be required to sign a permission slip.

- Sun cream, should be individually labelled with child's name in original bottle and that parents "must" supply it for us to apply if required during day. Sun cream will be stored in a press out of reach and not in children's bags.
- Parents/guardians provide a sunhat for children.

We will ensure that:

- On very hot days children will have reduced exposure to sunlight in the middle of the day.
- Where possible, children can seek shade when outside in the sun.
- Ensure that children will wear a sunhat if provided by the parent.

Adult/Child Ratios:

The adult/child ratio for outdoor play will be in compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, staff will be vigilant about supervising children outdoors.

Outdoor Programme:

- We will ensure that children have access to a range of outdoor activities to: climb, run, crawl, balance, jump, throw, catch, pour, sort, pretend and access different levels.
- The garden encourages children to participate in growing vegetables and planting flowers.
- A variety of activities take place outdoors and children can utilise a range of outdoor equipment
- The outdoor play area will be safe and scaled to a child's size.
- The outdoor time will be maximised through an intentional, well-planned approach to arranging the space and using the time.
- The programme will create a positive tone supporting a child's natural curiosity in playing outdoors.
- There will be opportunities for children to encounter and interact with each other.
- Children will be given the freedom to select safe materials to use outdoors to build upon their natural sense of exploration.
- The outdoor space offers choices for children.
- The programme will involve both child-led and teacher-led activities, where active problem solving will be encouraged.

Interactions:

Staff should be actively involved with children in their games and activities where appropriate and should not be solely in a supervisory role. Staff should be:

- Talking with children in a variety of ways (conversing, discussing, questioning, modelling and commentating).
- Helping children to find solutions to problems.
- Supporting, encouraging.

- Extending their activities by making extra resources available and providing new ideas.
- Initiating games and activities.
- Joining in games and activities when invited by children.
- Observing, assessing and recording.
- Aware of safety issues.
- Aware of every child's equal right of access to a full outdoor curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated regardless of race, culture, religion, gender or disability.
- Evaluating observations in order to plan appropriate resources and experiences.

Storage:

Equipment such as balls, bats, skipping ropes, mud kitchen equipment, diggers etc. are stored appropriately.

Outdoor Safety:

- When setting out the equipment each day and during sessions, staff must lookout for safety and remove any objects such as cans, bottles etc. which may have been left by others.
- The area should be checked for animal droppings.
- Before children go outside a member of staff must check the main gate is closed.
- Staff on duty outdoors must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care, be vigilant at all times and never leave the play area for any reason unless another member of staff has taken over responsibility.
- It is most important for staff to move around the area constantly so that all areas are adequately supervised. Each person should position him/herself in separate areas so that no area is unsupervised.
- At the end of the session the areas should be scanned carefully in case children should be left outside unsupervised.
- Hot drinks should not be taken into the outdoor areas.
- Students helping outdoors must never be left in charge of any area.
- All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy removal next day.

- If a child is injured, he/she should be taken indoors for treatment quickly as possible if necessary; if possible the child should be treated with the portable first aid kit outdoors. Both child and staff should remain within sight of another member of staff while treatment takes place. The floating staff member or the member in the outside area should replace the staff treating the child so that supervision of the areas is interrupted for as short a period of time as possible.
- Details of the accident must be written up as soon as possible in the first aid book. The child's parent must be informed of the accident and treatment.
- Students/volunteers may not administer first aid.
- Children are allowed to climb trees to an appropriate height. Children must not climb higher than a supervising adult's hand reaching height. Any change to this must be agreed by Manager.
- Children's clothing should be monitored carefully e.g. unfastened shoelaces and buckles, scarves and ties on anoraks which are too long can easily cause accidents, particularly on wheeled toys and climbing equipment.
- When children are climbing on trees, staff must be continually aware of any risks (e.g. objects left underneath).
- All equipment is risk assessed and children and staff know and understand the rules of use.
- Whenever children carry equipment (clearing away or carrying planks, blocks etc.) they should be taught how to do it and staff should be aware of the risks involved and minimise them to ensure safety.
- Staff should store away outdoor equipment at the end of each day.