



Crathie Primary School

Play and Outdoor Learning

Policy and Guidance



Introduction

“Play and movement are essential for brain development as it is often through play that babies and young children learn about themselves, others and the world around them.”

Learning and Teaching Scotland (2010)

At Crathie School we recognise the importance of play and outdoor learning as part of the school day and that it is a right of a child to be able to play.

The UNICEF Children’s version of the UNCRC says simply: “Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.”



Play and outdoor learning take place for all learners regularly through the school day as part of their learning journey. We recognise the importance of play as part of early child development, skills development, a part of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and of a child’s emotional, social and mental wellbeing. It is also a part of our work as an Eco-School, developing skills for living sustainably through, for example, gardening, wildlife management and monitoring. This also links with work done as part of the children gaining their John Muir Awards, again working sustainably and learning about our local environment.

We recognise that play can be fun or serious but help learners to develop as individuals, within their learning community. It is part of a happy, healthy childhood but also helps to develop key skills.

Links to the UNCRC and Sustainable Development Goals

This policy links to Articles 13, 15, 23, 31. <https://www.unicef.org/sop/convention-rights-child-child-friendly-version>

Article 13 - You have the right to find out things and say what you think, through making art, speaking and writing, unless it breaks the rights of others.



Article 15 - You have the right to be with friends and join or set up clubs, unless this breaks the rights of others

Article 23 - If you are disabled, either mentally or physically, you have the right to special care and education to help you develop and lead a full life.

Article 31 - You have the right to play and relax by doing things like sports, music and drama

This policy links with Sustainable Goals 3, 4, 11 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Goal 3 – Good health and well-being

Goal 4 – Quality education

Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities.

Aims

Through play we aim to help pupils develop:

- Problem solving skills.
- Social skills.
- Language and communication skills.
- Self-regulation.
- Confidence and self-esteem.
- Independence
- Curiosity
- Resilience.



Play Opportunities

Opportunities for play should be available for all learners and in a variety of contexts. Children require time to develop key skills listed above. They should have regular play opportunities throughout the day and should have the opportunity to contribute their own ideas for provision.

Children should have places available to play both indoors and out. We have developed a loose parts area outdoor for children to engage in their natural



environment and learn sustainably. Children should also be well resourced to foster their play through the use of loose parts, natural materials, puzzles, costumes etc.

Opportunities for play allow for problem solving and trial and error. It allows for collaboration and gives learners the opportunity to try things out for themselves.

Risk

It is important that pupils feel they can take acceptable risks and challenge themselves beyond their capabilities. Allowing children to take acceptable risks develops their ability to independently judge risks and learn new skills.

Where necessary, comprehensive risk assessments are in place relating to the provision of play. Children will be involved in writing risk assessments and will talk about the benefits of taking risks.

What Does Play Look Like at Crathie School.

Play comes in lots of forms at Crathie School. Our youngest learners have the opportunity of a soft start in a dedicated room. The pupils have the chance to plan areas built around experiences and outcomes presently being worked on. Our older pupils can also use this room to give them the chance to enquire, solve problems, experiment and collaborate. There are further whole school, group based and individual opportunities to play as an integrated part of the school day.



Outdoor Play

The principal teacher at Crathie has completed the WALT course and is a qualified Woodland Activity Leader. This allows her to light fires and use tools.

Evidence indicates that time spent in outside spaces brings a wealth of health and well-being benefits in addition to providing opportunities for children to learn how to evaluate and manage risks. The outdoors provides excellent opportunities to use a wide range of skills and abilities not always relevant in the classroom. Children will participate in planned outdoor activities every week.

We have worked with local parents and partners to develop an outdoor loose parts area within the schools forested area. Children can visit this area in all weathers for free play or structured play activities.





The Pupils View

Play at Crathie should be:

“Lots and lots of toys and teachers changing the stations.”

“happiness and fun”

“Interesting and fun with all my friends.”

I love play when:

“doing experiments and pretend play.”

“making birthday cards.”

“catching pretend bad guys. Pretend shopping. Making fish plates.”

“building stuff in the outdoor classroom.”

“I like the ipads.”

“playing Scratch on computers and using the outdoor classroom is fun.”

“being outside and playing with the farm animals.”

“playing on the monkey bars.”





Reviewed by	Details	Date
F. Walmsley	Added WALT details Added pupil's being involved in risk assessments Added discussions about benefits of risks. Removed soft start for old pupils.	22.3.23
L. Field	Reviewed	April 2023

Revision	Details	Date
2.	Reformatting of document	April 2023