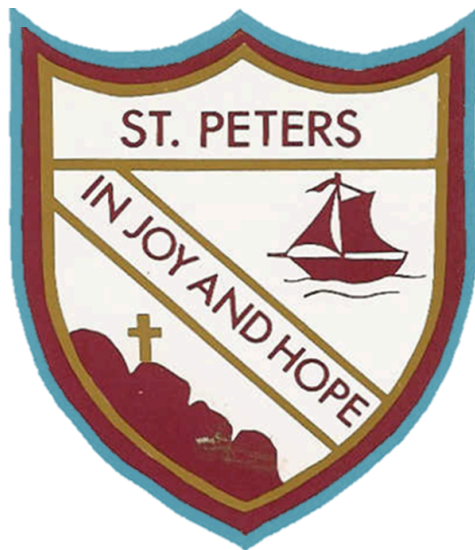


St Peter's Catholic Primary School



Outdoor Education Policy 2025-2026

Introduction

Our Outdoor Learning Policy aims to foster children's love of learning and an appreciation of the world around us. At St Peter's, we are lucky to have such a wonderful outdoor space and we aim to maximise the incredible experiences that this can provide for our children. The addition of the allotment area and the forest school provide us with unique opportunities to encourage and grow a love of nature and the outdoors, which has been proven to be beneficial for both mental and physical health.

We believe that it is important to enable and teach children to use the outside environment as a context for learning, starting from our very youngest children in the EYFS right up to Year 6.

Mission Statement

In Joy and Hope: In joy we live together. In hope we build for the future.

Rationale of Outdoor Education

Outdoor Learning is a broad term that includes but is not limited to outdoor play, school grounds projects, environmental education, recreational and adventure activities, and personal and social development. At a time when the environment is more important than ever, we aim to teach our children to respect nature, to care for and enjoy the world around them. This is not just limited to our own school grounds but also the wider community. Living on a peninsula provides the children with unique and relatively easy access to a variety of environments in our local area, such as beaches, farms and woodland.

Outdoor learning can provide a dramatic contrast to the indoor classroom. It creates additional experiences for all aspects of the curriculum, and in an extra curricular capacity. From Maths, PE and Understanding the World outdoors in the Early Years to Geography and History in Key Stage 2, we believe that every subject can be enhanced and taught through outdoor learning.

The Aims of Outdoor Learning

- Empower children to take ownership of their learning.
- To encourage and foster good mental and physical health.
- Encourage children to develop the skills to solve problems, developing resilient and reflective learners.
- Develop skills of communication, cooperation and collaborative learning.
- Provide a challenging, safe and secure environment within which children can take and manage risks.
- Encourage close links with parents and the school in celebrating our outdoor space and local community, and the rich learning we can enable within it.
- Encourage children to care for their environment and the world around them, so that they grow into conscientious, aware adults.

Health and Safety

We will support children to take risks within a safe and secure environment. Pupils will be taught to manage risks. Staff will ensure that the outdoor environment offers challenges and teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others.

Outdoor learning opportunities will be grasped when available and teachers will assess risk. In the first instance teachers will refer to and apply the schools policies relating to Health and Safety, and Risk Assessment prior to any outdoor learning activity that may require additional support beyond the reasonable activities one would normally apply within the classroom. It is also important that the school applies robust safety measures to effectively manage and minimise risks.

Our children are taught to manage risks in regard to outdoor learning. All pupils are regularly reminded about the importance of staying safe.

There is a shared understanding of how pupils safeguard themselves and others when undertaking outdoor learning. The following expectations will be taught to all pupils:

- Outdoor Learning is an important part of our learning journey.
- We must uphold our school expectation to be safe at all times when we participate in outdoor learning.
- We must always follow the direction of the adults in charge.
- We must stay with our group.
- We must be sensible.
- If we follow the expectations above, we will enjoy learning and stay safe.

Our Commitment to Outdoor Learning

We have recently invested in the development of the outdoor learning areas. The KS1 and KS2 playgrounds have benefited from a large financial investment to provide play equipment which will improve physical skills and play opportunities for the children. The EYFS children can access the play equipment under close supervision, which is crucial for their physical development for both gross and fine motor skills. In addition to this, F2 has an impressive array of outdoor equipment, so that all learning can also take place outside of the classroom. Additionally, an allotment area and outdoor classroom have recently been installed for all of our children to access and enjoy the outdoor areas of our school.

We advocate that the pace of learning can be enhanced by using the outdoors and that children who may find the classroom environment challenging will perform better outdoors, reducing the time spent on explanation and behaviour management. There is clear evidence that boys in particular, are more active in their learning in an outdoor environment.

Gardening Opportunities

Children from Pre-School to Year 6 have access to their own outside gardening areas. There are raised beds for growing vegetables and fruits, or flowers depending on the choice of the class. Harvested vegetables can be used in cooking lessons to promote healthy eating and sustainable living. Even the F1 children have grown their own potatoes for a number of years now and they are always excited to take their harvest to the kitchen to be cooked, and to sample their potatoes served in a variety of ways.

The Local Environment

The locality around school harbours a wealth of opportunities within relatively accessible distance. Learners can develop their skills to explore our local environment, for example, geography or history fieldwork, surveys and collection of data etc. The school mini bus is invaluable in enabling our children to access a range of local opportunities, such as visits to Hoylake Lifeboat Station and Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm.

Further Afield

We actively encourage teachers to plan opportunities for children to engage in learning beyond the school. Each year group has a planned programme of educational visits which complement and extend learning.

Residential Visits

Staying away from home is a powerful way of developing key life skills, building confidence, self-esteem, communication and team working, for example. Children have the opportunity to widen their range of experiences and find new skills and interests in which they may excel. Year 6 children enjoy an annual residential trip, and there is a move to organise a camping event at school for our younger children.

Children with SEND

Children with SEND are supported so that they are afforded the same opportunities as their peers.

Policy review

This policy will be monitored, evaluated, reviewed and updated every 2 years.

