

# THE ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL

Academy Trust - Special School

Mountdale Gardens, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 4AW

Head Teacher: Mrs. J. Mullan

Telephone: (01702) 524193

Fax: (01702) 526761

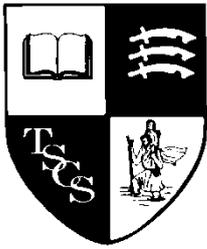
E.Mail: office@tscs.southend.sch.uk

Web: www.thestchristopherschool.co.uk

Christopher's Cottage



A Residential Respite Care /  
Sports Hall Facility



## THE ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL ACADEMY TRUST OUTDOOR LEARNING POLICY

**First Written:** May 2014

**Revisions:** May 2017

### RATIONALE

In their 2008 Report Ofsted found that 'when planned and implemented well, learning outside the classroom contributed significantly to raising standards and improving pupils' personal, social and emotional development.'

The Department for Children, Schools and Families found that when learning outside the classroom is implemented effectively, children:

- attain higher levels of knowledge and skills
- improve their physical health and increase their motor abilities
- socialise and interact in new and different ways with their peers and adults
- show improved attention and enhanced self-concept, self-esteem and mental health
- change their environmental behaviours as well as their values and attitudes.

These conclusions are supported by a wide range of academic studies, which also evidence the beneficial effects on both the social and educational development of children (Armstrong 1999; Barton 2010; Beedie 2000; Gilbertson et al 2005; Harris 1999; Jacobelli 2008; Maynard et al 2013; Reid 2010).

Further literature specifically links these benefits to children diagnosed with Social Emotional and Behavioural disorders (Association for Youth Children and Natural Psychology 2012; Loyd et al 2006; Putnam 2001; Taylor 2004; Van Den Berg and Van Den Berg 2011).

At The St Christopher School Academy Trust we feel it is essential to enable children to use the outside environment as a context for learning throughout the year.

### AIMS

- To raise the profile of outdoor learning.
- To encourage close links with parents, the local community and the school in celebrating our outdoor space and the learning that can take place within it.
- To ensure the school provides a safe, secure and stimulating outdoor environment that children can take risks in.
- To encourage children to care for their environment.
- To allow learning to be "hands on" and allow children to apply skills "first hand".



LOEC Mark (Gold)  
Learning Outside the Classroom



## **POLICY INTO PRACTICE**

Possibilities for outdoor learning will be considered throughout our planning, using it as a context and a natural resource for learning.

We will:

- ensure that the outdoor space harnesses the special nature of the outdoors, to offer children what the indoors cannot. (This should be the focus for outdoor provision, complementing and extending provision indoors.)
- ensure that our outdoor area and resources within it are flexible and versatile, where children can choose, create, change and be in charge of their play environment.
- support inclusion and meet the needs of individuals, offering a diverse range of play-based experiences.
- enable children to access the school outdoor areas on a regular basis.
- ensure that children enjoy energetic activity outdoors and the feeling of well-being that it brings, including opportunities to develop their large motor skills.
- observe, assess and record outdoor learning, ensuring that there is adequate provision for children to extend their learning.
- plan for outdoor learning with the children to offer experiences which have meaning to them and which are led by the child.
- enable children to work both individually and co-operatively outside.
- enable children to appreciate the beauty of nature; encouraging children to use a variety of natural resources.
- give children the opportunity to find a quiet space to relax.
- encourage children to enjoy and have fun outdoors in many contexts.
- work together (children, staff, parents, community) to create a better environment for all.
- organise and/or provide necessary resources (e.g. Wellington boots, raincoats).
- develop a set of rules through discussion with children. Enable children to use resources safely and to manage and use the space and freedom responsibly.
- help children to take responsibility and care for the outside environment and resources within it.
- encourage children to respect their environment and to care for living things.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Assessment of the children's learning will be valued equally indoors and outdoors and should be part of the same process. Subject leaders will be responsible for monitoring outdoor learning opportunities within their subject area. The named people responsible for overseeing learning outside of the classroom across the whole school are Amelia Howe for the primary department and Dashiel Allum for the secondary.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

A reasonable and proportionate balance between the value of experience and levels of appropriate risk needs to be fully assessed. In the first instance the schools policies relating to Health and Safety and Risk Assessment should be referred to and applied 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 procedures to effectively manage and minimise risks. It is equally important, however, that all involved, including parents acknowledge that a degree of residual risk remains.

It may therefore be prudent to discuss with parents their views regarding outdoor learning – and the degrees of risk that apply to specific activities. Parents are currently made aware that all pupils will engage in outdoor learning opportunities on and off site on a regular basis and a blanket parental consent exists for low risk off site activities as part of the normal school day.

## **SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The school named person responsible for approving Health and Safety at The St Christopher School Academy Trust is Louise Vinten. Full Risk Assessments for frequently used locations are kept in the school office and form tutors are required to write annual risk assessments for specific pupils within their class. If a risk assessment does not exist for a required location a pre-trip visit should be undertaken by the organising teacher and the resulting assessment signed off by a member of the senior management team. For further information on off site visits and risk assessment procedures please see the schools educational visit policy.

## **REFERENCES**

Association for Youth Children and Natural Psychology. (2012) *Overcoming ADHD without medication – A Parent and Educators Guidebook*. Newark Education and Psychology Publications (NJ)

Armstrong, T. (1999) *ADD/ADHD Alternatives in the Classroom*. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development (ASCD). (VA, USA)

Barton, J. Pretty, J. (2010) What is the Best Dose of Nature and Green Exercise for Improving Mental Health? A Multi-Study Analysis. *Environmental Science and Technology* Vol. 44. No.39. p.47-55.

Beedie, P. (2000) Teaching outdoor & adventurous activities: issues surrounding modes of delivery, *The British Journal of Teaching Physical Education*, 31, 4, p.18–20.

Gilbertson, K. Bates, T. McLaughlin, T. and Ewart, A. (2005) *Outdoor Education – Methods and Strategies*. Human Kinetics Publishers

Harris, I. (1999) *Outdoor education in secondary schools: what future?* Horizon publications.

Jacobelli, F. and Watson, L.A. (2008) *ADD/ADHD Drug Free- Natural Alternatives and Practical Exercises to Help Your Child Focus*. Amacom (NY)

Lloyd, G. Stead, J. and Cohen, D. (2006) *Critical New Perspectives on ADHD*. Routledge Press

Maynard, T. Waters, J & Clement, J. (2013) Moving outdoors: further explorations of ‘child-initiated’ learning in the outdoor environment. *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, 41:3, p282-299.

Putnam, S. (2001) *Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing Your ADHD Child with Exercise*. Upper Access (U.S)

Reid, K. Shields, M. (2010) Boys and Behaviour: Alternative Strategies That Support Boys with ADHD. *TEACH Journal of Christian Education*: Vol. 4: Iss. 1, Article 11.

Taylor, A. Kuo, F and Sullivan, W. (2001) Coping With ADD: The Surprising Connection to Green Play Settings. *Environment and Behavior*. Vol. 33 No. 1. January 2001. p54-77

Van den Berg, A. Van den Berg, C. (2011) A comparison of children with ADHD in a natural and built setting. *Child: Care, Health and Development*. Volume 37, Issue 3, pages 430–439

**Name:** **Dashiel Allum & Amelia Howe**

**Date:** **May 2017**