



St Michael's
C.E. Primary School

Outdoor Learning

Policy

Date	September 2025
Date for next review	September 2027

Our Theologically Rooted Christian Vision

Courage to Flourish in the Love of God

‘I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full’ (John 10:10)



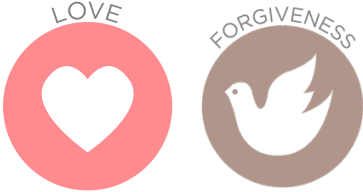
[Therefore],




‘Be strong and courageous... the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.’ (Joshua 1:9)

These biblical texts underpin our vision summary, ‘Courage to flourish in the love of God’. Jesus’ words from the New Testament describe his desire for everyone to be a full and flourishing version of their created selves, experiencing life in all its vibrant fullness, individually and in community. Our ambition is for everyone to encounter this fullness through the life and work of the school, whatever their background, beliefs or circumstances. God’s words to Joshua from the Old Testament illustrate how life, and learning, can be challenging, bringing setbacks and discouragement. These words inspire us to keep on going in those circumstances, confident that God watches over us and walks beside us.

The joining of these biblical texts is meaningful for the particular circumstances of our school community. It gives coherence to our aspirational vision that will grow courage and resilience as enablers of ‘life in all its fullness’ for everyone. To support our vision, we have seven overarching Christian values.

Our Core Christian Values

<u>Value</u>	<u>Biblical texts that underpin our values</u>
	Philippians 4:13 ‘I can do all things through him who strengthens me.’
	John 1:5 ‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.’
	1 Corinthians 13:4-8 ‘Love is patient and kind... it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.’ 1 John 1:9

	'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us'
	<p>Proverbs 3:5-6</p> <p>'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.'</p>
	<p>Hebrews 10:24</p> <p>'Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good.'</p>
	<p>1 Thessalonians 5:18</p> <p>'Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you'</p>

Aims and Objectives

At St Michael's C.E Primary School, the aims of Outdoor Learning are:

- To encourage children to have a healthy lifestyle, making the most of the benefits of learning outdoors for both physical and mental health.
- To use outdoor spaces effectively to promote positive relationships and well-being.
- To provide the opportunity for children to develop their gross motor skills and their general health and fitness in the outdoor environment.
- To motivate children and make school an enjoyable experience.
- To encourage children and young people to be aware of and take care of their environment.
- To empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing their minds and bodies to thrive.
- To deliver a wide range of progressive and frequent learning opportunities outside the classroom for all year groups.
- To allow children to express themselves through problem solving, investigations and exploration, promoting all the characteristics of effective learning.
- To make good use of outdoor space so that children are able to learn but working on a larger, more active scale than is possible indoors.
- To provide a safe and secure environment where children can manage and take risks.
- To provide opportunities to work independently and collaboratively with enthusiasm and perseverance.

Outdoor Learning Planning

The expectation is that teaching and learning across all subjects incorporates opportunities for outdoor learning. The curriculum at St Michael's is designed to provide outstanding opportunities for outdoor learning and is planned as part of all National Curriculum subjects/EYFS Curriculum and within a theme. Teaching staff will ensure that there is adequate adult supervision for groups of children working outside and that outdoor learning is well planned. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure that a risk assessment is in place for planned activities and individual children where health and safety may be at risk.

Health and Safety

At St Michael's CE Primary, pupils will be supported in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. Pupils will be taught how to manage these risks. It is important to ensure that the outdoor environment offers challenges and teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others. In the first instance, the school's 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. The school applies robust safety measures to effectively manage and minimise risks. It is equally important, however, that all involved, including parents acknowledge that a degree of residual risk remains and that all are aware of the degrees of risk that apply to the varying activities.

The School Grounds

At St Michael's Primary we are privileged to have grounds which offer opportunities for both formal and informal learning and play. Reception and Nursery each have their own outdoor environments which offer a wide range of learning opportunities. KS1 and KS2 have access to two playgrounds, two outdoor gyms, access to the Prayer Garden, wooded area, field and pond. Further changes to the outdoor environment are planned this year to increase opportunities for all children.

Recently, a Forest School area has been developed within the school grounds and opportunities are planned into the curriculum for year groups throughout the year. Forest School is an alternative way of learning and is taught by an experience practitioner. During a Forest School session, children work outside within the forest school area. Sessions are designed to be creative and fun, but also teach children about the environment and keeping themselves safe, including fire safety. Children take part in forest school sessions regardless of the weather.

The Local Environment

The locality around the school offers a wealth of learning opportunities within a manageable distance including Bluebell Woods, Bartley Green Reservoir and the local parks. Learners can develop their skills as they explore their local environment.

Places Further Afield

Teachers plan opportunities for children to engage in learning beyond the school grounds. Each year group has a planned programme of educational visits which complement and extend learning. These are planned into all aspects of the curriculum and, by taking learners beyond their familiar environment, stimulate their curiosity and imagination and motivate children in a powerful way. Teachers use Evolve to record and submit their risk assessments to the Head teacher at least two weeks before the trip.

Residential Places

Staying away from home is a powerful way of developing key life skills, building confidence, self-esteem, communication and team working, for example. Through visits to outdoor adventure centres such as Whitemoor Lakes, children are provided with an opportunity to widen their range of experiences and find new skills and interests in which they may excel. Risk assessments must be submitted to the local authority and the governing body two months before the trip for approval.

Inclusion and Differentiation (also see SEND Policy)

All children have the right to an education which is inclusive and which allows all to realise their potential. We operate an inclusive ethos for all our pupils including those with special educational needs. We provide a varied and diverse curriculum that is language-rich and enables all children to access at their own level and progress from their own individual starting point. We encourage all our children to challenge themselves, take risks and immerse themselves in the wider curriculum in order to discover their strengths and celebrate their successes.

EYFS Curriculum

The children in EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) have daily access to the outdoors, in the safety of the Nursery and Reception environment. Please see EYFS Policy and Curriculum Rationale.

Sustainability and Environmental Awareness

Outdoor learning at St Michael's supports our commitment to environmental sustainability. Children are encouraged to understand climate change, biodiversity, and the importance of sustainable practices. Activities include recycling, composting, planting, and learning about local ecosystems.

Use of Technology

Where appropriate, digital tools such as tablets, cameras, and data loggers are used to support outdoor learning. These tools help children document their experiences, conduct investigations, and reflect on their learning.

Staff Training and Development

Staff are provided with regular CPD opportunities to enhance their confidence and competence in delivering outdoor learning. This includes training in curriculum, risk assessment, and inclusive outdoor pedagogy.

Parental Involvement

Parents and carers are encouraged to support outdoor learning through volunteering, attending parent workshops, and reinforcing outdoor experiences at home. Communication about outdoor learning is shared regularly through newsletters and digital platforms.

Assessment and Impact

Outdoor learning is assessed through observation, pupil voice, and outcomes linked to curriculum objectives. Its impact is monitored through pupil engagement, well-being indicators, and progress in key skills.

Safeguarding

All outdoor learning activities are conducted in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that outdoor environments are safe, inclusive, and supportive for all learners.

Monitoring and Review

The class teachers are responsible for monitoring the standard of the children's work and the quality of teaching in the outdoors. The SLT are responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching in the outdoors, for being informed about current developments in this area and for providing a strategic lead and direction for outdoor learning in the school. The SLT will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicate areas for further improvement.