



# OUTDOOR LEARNING THROUGH PLAY POLICY

## Rationale

*Play provides opportunities for children to learn, as they discover, create, improvise and imagine. Children's immersion in their play illustrates how play enables them to simply enjoy being.*

*(Early Years Learning Framework, p, 15)*

At Southern Grove Primary School child directed play in the outdoor learning environment is a valued process for children's learning, thinking, imagination, and the development of social skills. Play is a child's natural learning approach and contributes to their knowledge and skill development across the cognitive, linguistic, social/emotional, creative and physical domains, while also providing a solid foundation for their future learning.

Through play, children develop an understanding of their social world, as they learn to trust, form relationships, share, negotiate, take turns and resolve conflict. Play allows children to experience and to understand difference and diversity.

At SGPS the outdoor space must be viewed as an essential teaching and learning environment which is linked to the learning that happens within the classroom. Teachers planning the outdoor learning areas create an environment that offers opportunities for discovery and challenge, with the aim of encouraging students to actively construct their own learning experiences.

At SGPS all staff plan the outdoor learning environment taking into account the academic, social, emotional and physical development of the students. The outdoor learning environment is representative of the investigation areas within the Walker Learning Approach. Activities are open-ended to encourage and support purposeful play and exploration.

When planning the outdoor learning environment staff consider:

- The learning intentions of the outdoor learning area
- Opportunity for individual, co-operative and parallel play
- Appropriate use of resources
- Staff interaction, guidance and support
- Quality play opportunities

*'The success of outdoor play rests with the staff. It is only when the whole staff support and enjoy outdoor play that it will work. If adults provide quality outdoor play children will become confident and independent learners.'*  
*(Outdoor Play in the Early Years – Helen Bilton)*

At SGPS teaching and non-teaching staff are present in the outdoor learning environment and responsive to the focus and direction of children's play. All staff invest time in connecting with our children through play and are not solely in a supervisory role. During child directed play sessions staff are engaged in:

- Talking with the children in a variety of ways (conversing, discussing, questioning and modelling)
- Helping children to find solutions to problems
- Supporting and encouraging students
- Extending children's learning by making extra resources available and providing new ideas
- Joining in games and activities when invited by students
- Aware of safety issues
- Observing students in order to plan appropriate play experiences that promote the "what next?"





*'If you make an environment hazard free it becomes challenge free, and then children have less experience in making decisions on their own, less opportunity to assess their own personal frontiers and less opportunity to gain confidence and self-esteem through coping independently.'*  
(Physical risk taking; dangerous or endangered? Stephenson A. 2003)

At SGPS teaching and non-teaching staff create a safe, physical environment which allows risk and challenge. All staff monitor the outdoor learning environment to assess for danger. To ensure a safe environment staff need to:

- Be aware of dangers in the area and remove hazards e.g. poisonous plants, loose paving etc.
- Make a risk assessment of the outdoor area and check this regularly
- Make sure that there is opportunity for challenge
- Discuss safety, risk and challenge on a regular basis with the students

*'Children need time to develop their play. The ability to imagine and play is a skill that can be learnt. It is essential that educators consider imagination and play as important aspects of children's learning.'*  
(Belonging, Being and Becoming EYLF 2010)

At SGPS students will be provided with uninterrupted and prolonged play through the addition of child directed play sessions at lunch and afternoon break time every day. Students will be able to move freely between the indoor and outdoor learning environments when appropriate. Students will demonstrate the 4 core values of our school during child directed play time.

At SGPS we understand that building relationships with every child in our school is the key to their success. During child directed play time our staff will spend Time Interacting and Connecting with our Kids (TICK time). During this time, all staff will:

- Be committed to the implementation of the OLPP
- Display 'with-it-ness' – to pick up the feel or the vibe of the playground
- Reinforce the common language and agreed rules as outlined in the Outdoor Learning through Play Policy (OLPP)
- Interact with students by getting involved in the play, actively listening and taking part in genuine conversations with students.
- Listen and offer assistance with regards to disputes before they accelerate to a high level. Help children to solve the problem
- Be consistent and fair when dealing with issues (implementing a behaviour education approach rather than a behaviour management approach)
- Teach behaviour education (social thinking skills) in class and model and scaffold these in the playground
- Be on time to their TICK area at the start and during swap over; your colleagues cannot have their break until you arrive
- Wear a hi vis vest, hat and have a TICK bag
- Refer major incidents to the administration office. We do not have a detention bench – we do have a bench where students can sit and reflect on their behaviour and then have a chat with an adult about where to next
- Be out at reset time to encourage and model how to reset the environment

During child directed play in the outdoor learning environment we expect that all students will;

- Demonstrate the school values – be kind, be caring, be brave and use good manners. (refer to the Expected Behaviour matrix for more detail)





- Wear a hat when in the outdoor area
- Include others in their games and play
- Treat equipment with care and return equipment to the correct place
- Reset – stop what they are doing when the music starts and reset the area they are in, ensuring the area looks engaging and inviting, get a drink, go to the toilet and then line up at class

## Outcomes

Objectives	What will this look like?
To build relationships and foster friendships	Staff building positive, authentic relationships with students across all year levels Staff and students sitting or playing side by side Staff and students engaging in student and staff-initiated conversations Staff present and engaged – not clock watching Staff actively fostering friendships (student to student) within and across year levels
To provide opportunity for students to practice their social and conflict resolution skills	Students practicing the specific skills taught through our behaviour education program with scaffolding and modelling from staff when needed Staff taking the time to help students find solutions to their issues – relieved by another staff member if necessary, to allow follow through Students talking to a range of adults and peers
To allow students to take calculated risks and challenge themselves	Allowing children to climb, create imaginative spaces, engage in water play, experiment and use a variety of tools, resources and equipment. Staff with their shoes off, actively engaging in the play
To teach students how to care for the environment and resources	Staff and students actively resetting the outdoor learning environment Staff teaching the students how to look after the resources and make the areas look engaging.
To engage students in a range of meaningful play experiences	Students being heard and able to request games Students having input into outdoor learning areas Exposing students to different games, including those from other cultures Promoting inclusive play (tolerance of others) Students displaying good sportsmanship – being a good winner and loser Staff and students constructing agreed rules for specific games e.g. soccer, table tennis etc. to make sure everyone is playing fairly

## Curriculum Links

How does the OLPP link to our plans and the curriculum?		
Social and Emotional Programs	Curriculum	Attitude, Behaviour, Effort (ABE)
School values Be kind Be caring Be brave Use good manners	Walker Learning Statement of Intent Developmental domains Learning intentions across all learning areas	P-2 Is enthusiastic about learning Participates responsibly Sets goals and works toward them Cares for the environment
Walker Learning Approach Building relationships	Health and Phys Ed Gross motor skill development	3-6 Is enthusiastic about learning





Open ended investigative play Intentional planning Class meetings (3-6)	Being healthy, safe and active	Sets goals and works towards them with perseverance Shows confidence in making positive choices and decisions Participates responsibly in environmental activities
Play is the Way Common language Lessons Games	HASS Civic responsibility	
Super Flex	STEM Sustainability Construction Design	
We Thinkers	ARTS Music Visual Dance/drama	
Be You	LITERACY AND NUMERACY Embedded in all areas	

### Self – Assessment

How will we know it is working?	Evidence/ Data	Resources
increased rates of student engagement staff 'know' increased number of students less incidents of teasing, fighting, bullying reduction in number of incidents dealt with by staff/admin after breaks reduction in number of students who are on their own during break times shared understanding of rules for specific games happy students and staff students are calm when they enter class after break time increased capacity to learn decrease in ABE seldom and inconsistent resetting is embedded without constant reminders from the exec team	Surveys Integris Documented plans LST meetings Chaplain involvement ABE data Staff Photo Challenge	Funding in Student Engagement budget in contingencies for purchase of resources, games and equipment Play is the Way PL

