

## WHITEFIELD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Policy on the School Environment

#### 1 Aims and objectives

- 1.1 The school environment, both indoor and outdoor, must contribute positively to the attitudes, behaviour and motivation of the pupils. The quality of the learning environment is very important to children, and has a considerable influence on their academic standards. We aim therefore to provide a safe and stimulating learning environment, making maximum use of the opportunities provided by both the grounds and buildings of the school.

#### 2 Indoor environment

- 2.1 All teachers will take responsibility to ensure that their classroom is an attractive place in which to learn. The purposes of providing a stimulating classroom environment are:

- to engage the children and promote interest and motivation;
- to support learning in the topics being studied;
- to show appreciation of the work and effort of all pupils;
- to recognise excellent work and help to promote high standards.

Displays will reflect the themes currently being studied by the pupils. Displays should not only be relevant and attractive, but should also aim to be as interactive as possible. This means that children will be encouraged to look at the displays and make use of the information on show. Displays will be changed regularly, and at least once a term.

- 2.2 Providing a safe environment is of paramount importance, and all teachers will give due regard to the health and safety policy when organising their classrooms. For example, tears to carpets or faulty electrical fittings, heaters, etc. must be reported immediately. Classrooms will be cleaned each day and we will ensure that the children have a clean, safe and welcoming place in which to learn.
- 2.3 In all that we do, we will strive to engender positive attitudes towards the environment. This means that we will teach the children to have respect for the equipment and facilities in the school, and to play their part in looking after their classroom and the environment in general. Children will be expected to leave classrooms in a neat and tidy condition. No litter will be left on the floor and all equipment will be put away in the appropriate place. The children will be expected to take responsibility for looking after school equipment, collecting it at the start of lessons and putting it away at the end.
- 2.4 Any valuables should be given to the class teacher for safekeeping.
- 2.5 The appearance of the entrance foyer is very important, as it creates the first impression of the school for all visitors. We will ensure that this area reflects the school's ethos and high expectations. There is also an achievement area which displays the awards earned by the school, such as sports trophies or academic certificates. There will be an area for newspaper cuttings that reflect the importance attached to the school by the community. There will be a photograph gallery with the names of all staff.

### **3 Outdoor environment**

- 3.1 Research shows that school grounds have a significant effect on children. These grounds are the one external environment to which all children have regular access, and for some of our children, they provide the only regular experience of the outdoors. They can provide unique experiences, opportunities and resources for teaching and learning in a safe and supervised external environment. They can be a stimulating and enjoyable place for both work and play.
- 3.2 We believe that the outdoor environment provides the following benefits. It can:
- enrich all areas of the curriculum, by providing a unique and varied context for learning;
  - stimulate motivation and curiosity, encourage creativity and help pupils to develop a broad range of skills, competencies, knowledge and understanding;
  - create opportunities for pupils to increase their understanding of sustainable development;
  - decrease the incidence of inappropriate behaviour, bullying, damage and vandalism;
  - afford opportunities for pupils to work together with adults for the common good, thus encouraging a sense of pride, ownership and responsibility.
- 3.3 The outdoor environment is very important in providing opportunities to enrich the curriculum. For example, in a project on 'sunflowers' the children grow their own sunflowers from seed, harvest them, record what they find and make use of the data in both mathematics and ICT. They research the sunflower through art and history, and write about it. They learn about the seed-to-seed cycle for science. They learn about sunflowers as a crop, and how oil is produced. They can also enjoy the visual and tactile appeal of these striking plants, and every child takes a sunflower home as the project ends.
- 3.4 By using learning strategies that enable the children to make use of all their senses, we can appeal to all learning styles. It is easier to remember what you have heard, seen, touched, tasted and smelled. The outdoor environment enables teachers to make learning as practical and 'hands on' as possible.
- 3.5 The school has an area set aside for gardening. We grow vegetables and flowers. There are planters near the entrance to the school, which have been allocated for each class to nurture.
- 3.6 We have two playgrounds – one for the foundation stage and one for Year One to Year Six. Children must play in their own playground only. This is particularly important for the foundation stage children who may otherwise feel intimidated by the bigger children. We endeavour to provide an imaginative play area for our children. There are a number of benches provided for the children to use. The playgrounds are also marked out for a number of games, including netball and football.
- 3.7 The sports field is used for a variety of games activities and is used by all children during some PE lessons. We encourage the children to use the field during the summer term at lunchtime for games, but they are not allowed to go on the field during the winter, because it is unsafe then. The school does not allow the public to walk dogs on the school field, and staff will take all reasonable measures to ensure that the field is free from excrement.
- 3.8 The grounds are maintained by a contractor employed by the school governors. The contractor provides a grass-cutting service, maintains the trees on the site and marks out the sports pitches.

### **4 Health and safety**

- 4.1 The governing body abides by the Education (School Premises) Regulations of 1999 (SI 1999/2), in which standards are set regarding school premises for all decisions concerning

the school environment. The health and safety of all who use the school are of paramount importance. The school also follows the LA's guidance on health and safety matters, and it has adopted the relevant LA policy.

- 4.2 The headteacher has the responsibility of carrying out risk assessments on all equipment and the general school environment. The governing body will ask for regular reports from the headteacher about health and safety matters, including a record of what accidents have occurred in each term, and what safety inspections have been carried out.
- 4.3 Children will be supervised at all times when they are on the school premises during normal school hours, whether indoors or outdoors. The school will ensure particularly that there is adequate supervision of pupils before school, at break and lunch times, and after school, when they are using the playground and the school field. Children will not be allowed to use the garden area by the pond without proper adult supervision.

## **5 Monitoring and review**

- 5.1 The class teacher has the responsibility for maintaining a well ordered and tidy classroom. The school will ensure that the classrooms are cleaned on a daily basis during term time.
- 5.2 The school environment will be monitored by the headteacher as part of his or her daily duties. A report on the school environment will be presented to the governing body on an annual basis.
- 5.3 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if necessary.

**Signed:**

**Date:**