**St. Francis’ Nursery Unit**

**Indoor/Outdoor Play**

**Individual Choice Policy**

We, the staff of St. Francis’ Nursery Unit, attribute the same value to both indoor and outdoor play, as both equally promote the holistic development of the young child. We also recognise that children learn in different ways and as a result require different teaching and learning methods, styles and activities. Consequently, we strive to provide similar areas of play both indoors and out. These areas include indoor and outdoor sand, water, painting, chalking, drawing, free creative, books, role-play, small world/imaginative, construction, music, interest, plant and physical and manipulation areas. These areas are planned in accordance with our Nursery Curriculum, monthly topics and the interests and developmental needs of the children in our care.

As we recognise the value of both indoor and outdoor play equally, we aim to give the children the choice of the indoor or outdoor play on a daily basis. In doing so we aim to develop the children’s ability to make choices and develop their thinking skills and personal capabilities. However, in Term 1 in order to encourage the children to experience and access all areas of the Nursery, the staff use a grouping system with one group of children going outside at a time. Those going out will wear a high visibility jacket. Each class has a different coloured jacket and this enables the teacher to recognise whose class each child is from for making observations and for pastoral care i.e., if someone is upset or needs assistance. While we aim to provide Indoor Outdoor Play daily, unfortunately the weather at times limits the time the children can spend outdoors. Staff will use their professional judgement on days of inclement weather.

On pleasant days, wet and dry, we aim to provide the choice of indoor or outdoor play sessions from approximately 10 am, thus enabling both members of staff in each class to greet children, settle them in and to talk to parents if required. This also gives the children time to settle in, have snack and share their stories before the doors are opened for outdoor play if the children decide to do this. This is particularly important in the first few months when the children are settling into Nursery.

We aim to finish the indoor/outdoor play sessions at 11.00 am, so that the children can tidy up, prepare for dinner and have whole group time on the mat area inside before dinner at 11.50 am.

While we would like to provide an indoor or outdoor play choice daily, in extremely wet and cold weather the staff will use their professional judgement, to decide whether it is plausible to have outdoor play, taking into consideration the health and safety issues
relating to both children and staff. However, we will strive to provide as many indoor/outdoor play sessions as is reasonably possible during all the seasons.

It is our policy to ask parents to ensure that their children have suitable outdoor clothes for all types of weather and to put sun cream and sunhats on in the summer weather. This is done through our monthly newsletters, informal chats with parents, parents meetings and the information boards.

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