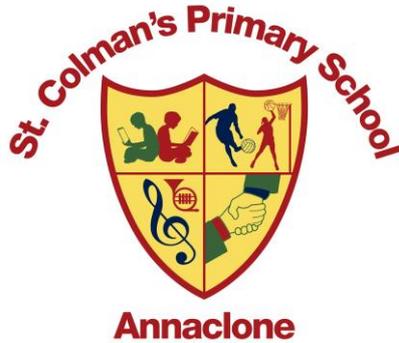


# St. Colman's Primary School/ Annaclone



## All Saints' Nursery Unit

# Play Policy

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# Vision Statement

## Vision Statement

To be an inclusive, caring School where childhood and community are valued; one, which inspires learning for life and develops the personal qualities needed to succeed in a rapidly changing World. This vision will be best realised as we undergo a continual journey of collaboration and progress through partnership, leading to excellence.

## Mission Statement

**We believe that each child will succeed through experiencing quality in:**

- ❑ A broad and challenging curriculum
- ❑ Innovative teaching and an investigative approach to learning
- ❑ A stimulating learning environment
- ❑ An enriching programme of extra-curricular activities and visits
- ❑ A rich, varied and up-to-date range of learning resources
- ❑ An ethos of support, challenge and encouragement to succeed
- ❑ Learning partnerships between the school, home and parish community

**We demonstrate our commitment to working as a learning community by:**

- ❑ Striving for continuous improvement in all that we do
- ❑ Working collaboratively towards common goals

## Aims for the Pupils

St. Colman's Primary School and All Saints' Nursery Unit (Annaclone), promote high achievement and learning for life by working with the staff and children to:

- ❑ Develop enquiring minds and a spirit of curiosity
- ❑ Promote well-being and the importance of a healthy work/life balance
- ❑ Encourage excellence and the development of new skills
- ❑ Ensure the children in our school are immersed in their community but are also forward facing and expansive in outlook
- ❑ Achieve their highest standards in all areas of the curriculum

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- ❑ Have high self-esteem - respecting themselves, others and the environment by our positive approach to behaviour thus ensuring that each individual is motivated to do his/her best
- ❑ Utilise and provide opportunities to develop their thinking skills enabling them to work independently or collaboratively
- ❑ Be an integral part of the Parish community - one which fosters a faith commitment to Christ and prepares pupils for a fuller participation in the life of the Church
- ❑ Seek to extend themselves in mind, body and spirit
- ❑ Become highly motivated life-long learners
- ❑ Gain advanced technological skills and an awareness of Global Issues
- ❑ Be flexible and adaptable for the modern world

## Our School Values:

- Happiness and enjoyment
- Effort, attitude and perseverance
- Team, school and community spirit
- Honesty, fairness and trustworthiness
- Respect and tolerance
- Politeness, kindness and caring
- High standards of behavior
- Partnerships and collaboration



## Ethos of the School

St Colman's Primary School and All Saints' Nursery Unit sets out to create a caring and supportive environment, where all children can develop intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially, morally and spiritually.

In addition, the delivery of the curriculum is designed to develop interest and motivation in children using enthusiastic teaching and interesting and relevant learning activities.

- Children are encouraged to achieve high standards and are given as much help as they may need in order to achieve success.
- There are many extra-curricular activities that encourage co-operation and discipline through team games. Children are further encouraged through a variety of musical/dramatic productions to develop self-discipline.
- Within this context there is a code of discipline that is consistently enforced to ensure that the education of children takes place in an orderly and caring environment.
- Through continual monitoring of individual children's achievements, class teachers provide work pitched at a level that challenges each child yet does not frustrate.
- Good relationships within the School are vital. The staff set an example by working well together with a harmony of purpose and providing an interesting and caring environment within their classrooms.
- As part of the pastoral dimension of the School, children are taught how to care for others, to respect other people's points of view and to respect property. Children are encouraged to contribute to charity and to help people who are less fortunate than themselves.

## **Structured Play**

In St Colman's Primary and All saints Nursery Unit all the staff are committed to Structured Play as a means of delivering the Pre School Curriculum and the Northern Ireland Curriculum. It is seen as an effective and valuable approach to learning. The staff ensures that planned opportunities for free and structured play activities are offered for the development of every child's social, physical and intellectual development.

### **We believe that through play children learn to:**

- Express their thoughts and feelings
- Satisfy their natural curiosity
- Explore and investigate
- Experiment
- Inhabit imagined situations
- Develop skills which help them to come to terms with the 'real world'
- Interact socially with other children and with adults
- Consolidate learning

### **Aims for Structured Play:**

- To provide an enjoyable stimulating and creative environment that will promote learning and help develop the whole child
- To improve concentration
- To encourage children to respect and care for classroom materials and equipment and play safely
- To develop self-esteem, self-confidence, independence and a positive attitude towards learning.
- To help the child relate to adults and other children, to encourage co-operation, taking turns, sharing and self-control.
- To stimulate curiosity and foster skills of observation, investigation and problem solving.
- To provide opportunities to develop and use skills necessary for talking, listening, reading and writing.
- To develop communication skills.
- To develop and reinforce mathematical concepts and skills related to the curriculum
- To encourage creativity, self-expression and imaginative thinking
- To promote co-ordination and develop gross and fine motor skills.

## **Play across the Primary School and Nursery**

### **Progression in Play**

Progression in play reflects the observation and assessment of children's knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to provide developmentally appropriate experiences. Children come to pre-school already as skilled learners. Through our observations, assessment and professional judgement we gain valuable insights into how each one learns best. This information informs our planning to meet the needs of each individual child. Progression in play comes about as a result of a real understanding of the interests, needs and experiences of the child.

As practitioners, we need to understand that there must be a progression in the provision of activities to meet the developmental needs of children. (CCEA)

*Below outlines how we in St Colmans Primary School and All Saints Nursery work together to ensure there is progression in play from Nursery to Key Stage 1:*

### ***The Role of the Adults***

The adults will facilitate the progression in learning by planning appropriate activities.

They will:

- Support and encourage children in their play
- Provide good quality resources
- Be aware of the potential learning in all areas of the curriculum
- Model skills involved in play
- Interact with the children, asking questions and making suggestions to support their learning
- Be familiar with key vocabulary – model and support children in their use of key words
- Work alongside children, modelling skills and attitudes
- Read with children from fiction/non-fiction books, plans, instruction cards etc.
- Scribe children's ideas and thoughts, and display their work
- Observe children's learning and use of the provision
- Assess children's development/progress to inform planning for future learning (CCEA)

## **Play in Nursery**

All Saints Nursery understands that play is something that children really enjoy. A child's play has a purpose and can be a step towards the learning and understanding of valuable skills. It can help the child fit into the world physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially, and helps them grow to be a healthy and competent individual.

All Saints Nursery will endeavour to provide children with a stimulating environment, where playing and learning go hand in hand. A varied selection of activities will be provided throughout the day, using both indoor and outdoor activities.

Consideration will be taken to ensure that provision is made for children with special needs and abilities.

## **Play in Primary School**

### ***The Northern Ireland Curriculum***

In St. Colman's Primary School we believe that active learning is central to learning and teaching in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Active learning is an umbrella term that encompasses both play and activity based learning. The following quotations are taken from The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary (Approaches to Learning and Teaching p. 9) and outline what we are aiming to achieve in our school:

"It is important that children have opportunities to be actively involved in practical, challenging play-based learning in a stimulating environment."

*Learning at the Foundation Stage should foster the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual development of pupils by:*

*• using to the full opportunities provided by play for their development, both socially and academically;*

*Play in school is planned according to the curriculum and is divided between the foundation stage and Key Stage 1:*

### **Play in the Foundation Stage**

Play in the Foundation Stage is built on active, hands on learning which allows the child to develop knowledge and understanding.

Foundation stage teachers aim to create a varied and interesting environment that stimulates social, physical, creative, emotional and intellectual play. Foundation stage includes the provision of open space, music, lighting and range of objects and materials (loose parts) that children can select to develop their own play.

Teachers in the foundation stage plan activities and provide resources that are based on children's interests and supports individual children's needs to ensure all children enjoy themselves.

### **Play at Key Stage One**

Play/activity based learning at Key Stage One builds on the active, hands on learning that has taken place in the Foundation Stage. It is usually linked to a topic/theme and allows children to engage in a variety of focused play activities AND independent play based games/activities, for example, construction, role play, art/design and table top games.

(Learning through Play at Key Stage 1, page 6).

The following quotations refer to Key Stage 1 and are taken from The Northern Ireland Curriculum Primary (Introduction to Key Stage 1, p. 48). They outline our aims for learning at Key Stage 1:

*Learning at Key Stage 1 should:*

- Provide children with opportunities to engage in exploration, problem-solving and decision making;
- Promote positive attitudes to learning and help children make informed and responsible choices and decisions
- Develop children's creativity
- Use a range of strategies including thematic approaches, in a wide range of contexts which are worthwhile, challenging, relevant and enjoyable.

## Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

In St. Colmans Ps and All saints NU we believe that play/activity based learning develops children's thinking skills and personal capabilities.

This opinion is supported by the following quotation:

At the heart of the Northern Ireland Curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of pupils' skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for operating effectively in society. By engaging pupils in active learning contexts across all areas of the curriculum, pupils' personal and interpersonal skills and capabilities and their ability to think both creatively and critically are developed.

(Ref.: Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities for Key Stages 1 & 2 (CCEA, 2007)

## Links with Areas of Learning

In St. Colmans Primary School and All Saints Nursery we infuse play/activity based learning through the areas of learning.

The following quotation from THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM PRIMARY, p.5 supports this method:

***Children learn best when learning is connected. The experiences provided for our children during play/activity based learning encompass the six areas of learning. The learning is integrated through a topic based approach and enables children to make appropriate connections. Emphasis is placed on the development of skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for operating effectively in society.***

## The Development of Skills, Attitudes and Dispositions

In St. Colman's Primary School and All Saints' Nursery Unit, skills, attitudes and dispositions are developed through play/activity based learning.

We feel that as children engage in activity/play-based learning, they are developing skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for operating effectively in society. During activity/play-based learning, children have opportunities to develop skills in Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision Making, Self-Management, Working with Others, Managing Information and Being Creative. We believe that the learning environment and learning opportunities we provide promote opportunities for our children to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TS&PC) as well as positive attitudes and dispositions to learning.

### Play in St. Colmans PS and All Saints NU helps our pupils to develop:

- self-confidence
- creativity
- curiosity
- independence
- communication skills
- self - expression.

### The adults in St. Colmans PS and All Saints NU strive to:

- involve the children in the planning process
- make learning relevant and enjoyable
- observe and assess regularly to inform future plans.

### The children in turn are able to:

- manage and enjoy their learning
- reflect on previous experiences
- make informed and responsible decisions.

## The Learning Environment

In St. Colmans PS and All Saints NU we value the importance of the learning environment. We aim to take account of each child's individual needs, interests and abilities by providing pleasant, secure and stimulating environment. Activities and resources which are both appropriate and challenging will develop individual abilities. Staff recognise the importance of praise, encouragement and guidance in the development of learning. The children will be encouraged to work in a variety of group situations and will be encouraged to tidy up independently.

The following quotation supports this belief:

*"Children need to have access to a stimulating environment which will encourage them to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience"*

(A Place to Learn: Lewisham Early Years Advice and Research Network)

## Nursery

All Saints Nursery aims to provide a sanctuary in which the children can play in a safe and secure environment, with staff who support and progress their learning. Opportunities will be made for the children to make choices for themselves and to experience spontaneous, unplanned activities, such as snow or the arrival of a fire engine. Play is provided both indoors and outdoors each day through a range of planned and unplanned activities:

### Messy Play

A large variety of different mediums, such as foam, corn flour, jelly, rice, spaghetti and dough will be made available. These will provide different tactile and imaginative experiences and will encourage expressive language.

### Sand and Water

These will be made available on a regular basis (we have large, fully equipped sand and water table). We also have a large Sand pit in our covered area which is available daily. Sand and water provide opportunities to experience scientific and mathematical concepts as well as encouraging social and language development.

### ***Creative Activities***

Activities such as painting, sticking, chalking and box modelling will be made regularly available. Additionally games such as ring games, lotto and snap will encourage conversation and the learning of social skills – taking turns, sharing, winning and losing.

### ***Imaginative Play***

All Saints Nursery recognises the importance of imaginative play for children and will aim to provide rich opportunities to widen the imagination. These will include areas such as; dolls and accessories, shops, restaurants, doctors surgery, vets, post office, garage, workshop, mud kitchen, road maps and cars, trains, dressing up clothes and a home corner. Various different play settings will be made available. There is also a selection of construction toys which additionally encourage good hand/eye coordination, counting, sorting, etc.

### ***Physical Play***

Tunnels, balls, hoops, climbing frames, football goals, balance activities, large construction, trikes, scooters, plasma cars, Tyres, wooden stepping stones, a parachute; are some examples of the varied apparatus and equipment provided.

### ***Books***

A variety of books are always available for children both indoors and outdoors, in the books room, on tables to link to learning for children to look at and read, both under supervision and alone. Story time takes place each day where children listen to stories new and old and stories which link to our current topics.

### ***Additional Equipment***

A variety of other equipment is available for children in the Nursery such as; A CD player, computer, interactive whiteboard, I pads, Vtech camera, and musical instruments. These will be available so that in addition to hearing and responding to music children will be encouraged to think about how sounds are produced. Nursery Rhymes and songs are a large part of Nursery and regularly sung in class.

## Foundation Stage

In the Foundation classes of St. Colman's P.S. the children's independence is fostered by well organised and structured physical environments. Teachers and classroom assistants are continually endeavouring to have resources labelled clearly and stored so that the children can access and return them independently.

The children have access daily to the following areas:

- **Role play**
- **Creative**
- **Construction (including recyclable materials)**
- **Sand/Water (Due to lack of space in some classes these two areas may be alternated on a half term basis)**
- **Drawing / Writing**
- **Small world**
- **Table top**
- **Play dough**
- **Book corner**
- **ICT**

## Key Stage 1

In St. Colman's we endeavour to have a well organised, stimulating and secure environment that enables children to become confident, active learners. Our practical approach to learning and teaching necessitates the ready availability of a diverse range of materials.

We try to ensure that the classroom environment promotes independence and that the skills fostered in the Foundation Stage continue to be developed in Key Stage 1. In order to promote independence and support active learning, the following resources are easily accessible to pupils:

- **I.C.T – Laptops, computers, Ipads, IWB**
- **Library area**
- **Writing materials – e.g. paper (variety of sizes and type), pens, felt-tips, pencils, rubbers, stapler, paperclips, cello tape, scissors, hole punch etc**
- **Writing/Drawing aids e.g. Art and Design materials e.g. paint, coloured paper, tissue paper, glue, card, pipe cleaners etc**
- **Recyclable materials**
- **Construction**
- **Table top and games**
- **Sand/water tray**

## Role of the Adult

In St. Colman's PS and All Saints NU our principal, teachers, assistants and ancillary staff adopt the roles of provider, facilitator, participant, observer and evaluator in order to promote quality play.

## Nursery

The Nursery teacher along with the Nursery assistants strive to:

- Provide a safe and stimulating environment that facilitates learning
- Teach the children how to interact with others and help them with their daily needs.
- Provide the children with a safe and caring environment to learn and grow.

- Plan appropriately to cater for the needs of all children and to include learning and development in all areas of the nursery Curriculum.
- Cater to the basic needs of the children.
- Develop and implement planning both indoors and outdoors
- Organise and supervise play and work activities (for example reading, cooking, music, dancing etc.)
- Liaise with parents/carers and professionals such as speech therapists and health visitors
- Maintain records
- Monitor and record each child's progress and development

### ***Foundation Stage***

The Foundation teachers, along with the classroom assistants strive to:

- Provide appropriate activities from the resources and materials available and match these to the interests and experiences of the children.
- Foster the children's own interests, encourage them to use their initiative, acquire concepts, develop confidence in handling materials, communicate and make decisions.
- Be a participant who initiates, encourages, questions, models, joins in, stimulates and extends the learning.
- Observe children carefully, assess their progress, evaluate the learning taking place and use the information gained to inform future planning.
- Be consistent and have a positive approach to behaviour management
- Be sensitive to the uniqueness of each child

### ***Key Stage 1***

As pupils in St. Colman's engage in activity-based learning, the adult's role is often that of facilitator, supporting pupils as they learn and develop skills.

In our schools the adult:

- Plans for and provides appropriate activities.
- Interacts with the children
- Works alongside children, modelling skills and attitudes.
- Asks open-ended questions
- Makes suggestions.

### **The Role of the Classroom Assistant**

In addition to the above we are aware that the encouragement and support of an adult at Structured Play is necessary to improve cognitive, social and emotional development. The additional support of the classroom assistant is therefore greatly valued.

To support the class the assistant will spend quality time with the children and interact with the children. The assistant will also observe and assess the children's needs, interests and understanding and intervene where appropriate. In addition the assistant will help to reinforce/extend/challenge learning as well as help to build the confidence and improve self-esteem of each pupil.

To support the teacher, the classroom assistant will implement plans, make observations and discuss these with the teacher and help with organisation and record keeping.

### **Planning**

Planning focuses on what the children know, understand and are able to do. Planning underpins effective learning and teaching and takes account of the developmental stage of the children as well as their previous experiences. Planning documents are regarded as flexible and are altered or added to as the children's responses and the outcomes of activities are observed.

As with all learning and teaching, planners are evaluated - good planning and effective assessment are closely related.

At St. Colman's Primary School and All Saints' Nursery Unit, we try to help pupils make appropriate connections between the areas of learning by teaching in a topic based approach. Through our play/activity based learning, we aim to ensure that:

- teaching builds on where the children are;
- children's needs and interests lead the learning;
- appropriate support is given to those children who require it;
- children are motivated and their learning challenged;
- children have high expectations of themselves

### **Nursery**

Topic based planners in Nursery:

- Outline what activities will be set out each topic
- Set out activities for each area of learning in the Nursery curriculum

Weekly based planners in Nursery:

- Outline the planned activities in each area in the nursery classroom
- Outline the resources needed for each area
- Provide the learning intentions for each resource
- Include the area of learning from the Nursery curriculum
- are evaluated to inform future planning;

### ***Foundation Stage***

Medium-term planners in Foundation stage:

- outline the planned activities and the resources required;
- identify the learning potential that the staff intend to promote in each area;
- are evaluated to inform future planning;

### ***Key Stage 1***

At present, planning for activity based learning is indicated in an informal way on existing medium term planners and a new planning format has also been devised to accommodate activity based learning more fully.

## **Management of Play Based Learning**

### ***Nursery***

Play based learning in All Saints Nursery is managed in the following ways:

- Planned by staff: using weekly observations, children's current interests
- Free Play – Children can choose to play at any area they choose
- Children are invited to play in a range of areas, often adults encourage children to try out different areas of Nursery
- Children often keep work to show parents at the end of the day, bring artwork home, etc
- Children tidy up the Nursery together with the help of adults.

## **Foundation Stage**

Play based learning in St. Colman's is managed in the following ways:

- Whole class introduction and planning time with adults.
- Freedom of choice: children choose where they want to play.
- Children may change places during play sessions.
- Children are informed when they have only five minutes left.
- When possible, children are allowed to keep unfinished pieces of work to the following day.
- Before tidying up, children are brought together to review their play. Children are also involved in making class books about their play that include shared writing, drawings and photographs.
- Children tidy up the play areas themselves

## **Key Stage 1**

Activity based learning is managed in our school in the following ways:

- The teacher discusses the activities on offer with the children.
- The teacher works with a focus group.
- The remainder of the children play independently and are given opportunities to choose their activity which relates to the topic.
- When play/topic time comes to an end children tidy up.
- Children demonstrate/discuss their learning.
- Children display their learning.

## Time Allocated to Play/Activity Based Learning

### Nursery

In Nursery the whole day is based around play activities which promote and develop learning in all areas of the Nursery curriculum.

### Foundation Stage

In P1 and P2 the children play for approximately one hour each morning/ engage in a sustained period of play each day.

### Key Stage 1

In Primary 3 and Primary 4 the teachers have dedicated time on their timetables and are working towards 2-3 hours per week.

## Observation, Assessment, Evaluation and Recording

### *Nursery*

In All Saints Nursery the staff observe children and respond appropriately to help them make progress. These observations and assessments are used to identify learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences.

Our general principles are that:

- assessment, planning, record keeping and evaluation are part of a continuing cycle involving the whole team
- assessment is observation based (written/ photograph)
- records will be kept of significant achievement which will be unique to the individual child (Memory Folder/ Observation Folder)
- They feed into planning which is to support the provision of the best possible learning experience for each child
- any assessment will be conducted in a sensitive and supportive manner
- Evaluation will take place daily, weekly and termly.
- They feed into information for parent teacher meeting and for end of year reports.

### **Foundation Stage**

In St. Colmans PS teachers undertake role play observations and they are a regular feature of classroom practice. They provide much information about the children and the quality of play provision.

Careful observations will help our teachers to:

- Assess the development of the child's physical, social and cognitive skills
- Monitor the child's progress
- Plan to meet the needs, interests and ability of the child
- Assess the appropriateness of the activities provided and the learning that is taking place
- Ensure that the child is experiencing a wide variety of experiences and not confining his/her play to a limited number of areas
- Know when extra materials are required to supplement or extend the play
- Assess the suitability of the equipment and materials being used
- Provide information for parents and other agencies involved in meeting a child's needs

Through time a flexible approach will be adopted which allows for both planned and spontaneous observations. Observations will be used to inform planning.

Observations should include information about the child's:

- Physical, social, emotional and cognitive development
- Thinking skills and Personal Capabilities
- Use of language in a range of situations
- Level of involvement and concentration
- Desire to plan his/her activities

### **Key Stage 1**

The Key Stage 1 teachers at St. Colman's PS carry assessments and evaluations of activity based learning.

Effective teaching and learning will be measured through:

- Teacher assessment
- Peer assessment
- Self-assessment

It will take the form of:

- On-going observation
- Discussion
- Reflection of the process and the product during the Plan, Do, Review Stages.

## Providing Equality of Opportunity and Access for All Children

In St. Colmans PS and All Saints NU we are aware that pupils have different experiences, interests and strengths, which will influence the way in which they learn. In planning play/activity based learning, we are aware of the requirements of the equal opportunities legislation and our school's Special Educational Needs and Disability Order.

We endeavour to have high expectations for all pupils and will aim to provide suitably challenging opportunities for them to participate in activities fully and effectively.