



SAINT NORBERT'S CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

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Mission Statement: To live, love and learn in the footprints of Jesus.

6th October 2025

Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL)

Dear Families,

Our school began its exciting 'OPAL' journey some time ago; this is a nationally-recognised approach which schools can adopt to transform playtimes into rich, creative and inclusive experiences for all children. Amongst a wide range of guiding principles, we particularly believe that play should:

- have its own value (it is not just a break from 'real' learning);
- be well-resourced and 'designed';
- enable children to negotiate, communicate, manage risk, manage emotions and collaborate with others;
- improve wellbeing, resilience and readiness to learn.

We are therefore delighted to have opened four new 'play zones' during lunchtimes so far, each designed to spark imagination, creativity and social interaction. To help us continue to bring these spaces to life, and if you are at all able to help, we would very much like to ask individual classes if you could consider donating items which might further enhance each zone.

Class 2 families: please would you consider supporting 'Zone 1 – The Digging Space'?

Children will be able to dig, build sandcastles and explore textures in our new sand and digging area.

Suggested donations: buckets, spades, small gardening tools, toy construction vehicles, sand moulds, sieves, clean containers.

Class 3 families: please would you consider supporting 'Zone 2 – The Performance Zone'?

This zone will allow children to express themselves through music, drama and role play.

Suggested donations: dressing-up clothes (hats, scarves, costumes), musical instruments (tambourines, maracas, toy keyboards), puppets, props for imaginative play.

Class 4 families: please would you consider supporting 'Zone 3 – The Mud Café'?

Here, children will create imaginative 'meals' using mud, gravel and natural materials - perfect for sensory and creative play.

Suggested donations: old kitchen utensils (spoons, bowls, pans), baking trays, muffin tins, plastic cups, natural items (pinecones, conkers, sticks), crates.

Class 5 families: please would you consider supporting 'Zone 4 – The Sociable Zone'?

A calm and friendly space where children can relax, chat and play board games with friends.

Suggested donations: board games (complete sets), cushions, picnic blankets, card games.

If you are able to donate anything during this initial phase, we kindly ask that donations be brought in by Friday 24th October, please, or any day in the meantime. If you have any questions, or are interested in contributing in other ways, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you – as always – for your continued support in helping us to create a vibrant and joyful play environment for all children.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Walker', enclosed within a light grey rectangular border.

S Walker