

# **Felixstowe Town Council Grant of £580 to the Friends of Fairfield and Colneis charity**

## **Who are the Friends of Fairfield and Colneis?**

The Friends of Fairfield and Colneis Parent, Teacher & Friends Association is a charity, run by elected volunteers who work to:

1. Develop effective relationships between staff, parents, community and others associated with the school.
2. Fundraise to provide facilities or equipment which support the school and advance the education of the pupils.

## **Why did we need a grant?**

Staff at Colneis identified that many children, in Years 3–6, are not getting enough regular access to outdoor play and fresh air during the school day. This reflects a wider UK trend, where children are spending increasing amounts of time indoors, with reduced opportunities for unstructured movement and exploration.

Research from organisations such as Natural England and NHS shows that regular time outdoors is linked to improved physical health, stronger concentration, and better emotional wellbeing in primary-aged children. Outdoor environments also support the development of social skills, resilience, and creativity in ways that indoor classrooms alone cannot.

There is a clear distinction between:

- Structured outdoor learning (teacher-led activities), which improves engagement, focus, and knowledge retention
- Unstructured outdoor play, which supports imagination, problem-solving, independence, and peer relationships

Both are essential. Children in this age group benefit from the ability to move between guided learning and self-directed exploration, particularly as academic demands increase in Key Stage 2.

However, without a weatherproof outdoor space, access to these benefits is inconsistent and often limited by the UK climate. This reduces opportunities for children to regulate their energy, reset emotionally, and engage in active learning throughout the day.

## How has the grant been used?

The grant has been used to create a reliable, all-weather outdoor area that is now used regularly by children across Years 3–6 (over 360 pupils).

During the school day, the space is used for structured learning, enabling teachers to take lessons outdoors across a range of subjects. This includes activities such as group work, reading, creative tasks, and practical learning, allowing children to engage in a different environment that supports focus, collaboration, and engagement.

The area is also used for unstructured play, giving children the opportunity to move freely, socialise, and use their imagination during breaks and less formal parts of the day. This balance between structured and unstructured use is important, as it supports both academic learning and social and emotional development.

Because the space is weatherproof, it is now used consistently throughout the year, rather than being limited to dry or warmer days. This has significantly increased the amount of time children can spend outdoors, making outdoor learning and play a regular and embedded part of the school experience rather than an occasional activity.



*What students say:*

*“Even when it’s raining, we can still go outside now, which makes school more fun.”*

*“I feel calmer when we’ve had time outside. It helps me think better when we go back in.”*

*What staff say:*

*“The outdoor space has completely changed how often we take learning outside. It’s no longer weather-dependent, which means we can plan for it properly rather than treat it as a bonus “*

*“The outdoor space has given us flexibility in how we teach. We can run small group work, reading sessions, and practical tasks in a way that feels calmer and less pressured.”*

**We are extremely grateful to Felixstowe Town Council for their grant of £580. Thank You!**