



12. OUTDOOR PLAY

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This policy has been communicated to parents/guardians.

Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy.

Relevant staff have received training on this policy.

Statement of Intent: Outdoor play is an important part of our daily curriculum at the Service. We aim to ensure that children play outdoors every day. Our intention, through our outdoor programme is to enhance gross motor skills, coordination, balance, and body awareness. It also gives children opportunities to socialise freely and use imagination and initiative.

Outdoor Area: The Service's outdoor area is located in the middle of the building and is accessed by the children and staff through classroom doors. The outdoor area consists of soft surface

Policy and Procedure: A well-planned environment provides opportunities for children to seek new challenges as they master old ones.

Close observation is essential in order to assess children's ability and to ensure appropriate planning and continuity for the outdoor curriculum. Staff will be vigilant about supervising children outdoors. The outdoor time is play time for the children. The adults are there to supervise and lead garden games or play and ensure that the children are in no danger to themselves or their peers.

Outdoor time is an extension of indoor activities therefore sitting should be kept to an absolute minimum.

- Staff should ensure that their presence and position in the outdoor play area allows that all areas of the outdoor area are under constant supervision and that all children are in the sight of at least one member of staff, at all times.
- The outdoor play area must be checked by a member of staff for safety before any children use the outdoor play area. (Risk Assessment)

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- Staff **must engage** with the children during the outdoor play time.
- Curriculum planning should be used outdoors as well as indoors.

Clothing: It is important that children are dressed appropriately for outdoor activity. Parents are asked to ensure their children have the appropriate attire for the weather.

Sun Safety: We request that parents/guardians:

- Apply sun cream to their child/children before they attend as in the first instance it is the responsibility of the parent to apply sun cream to their child/children.
- If necessary, put sun cream in the child's bag and request the staff member to apply the sun cream, every effort will be made by the staff member to do this and parents will be required to sign a permission slip.
- Sun cream should be individually labelled with child's name in the original bottle and that parents "must" supply it for us to apply if required during the day. Sun cream will be stored in a press out of reach and not in children's bags.
- Parents/guardians provide a sunhat for children.

We will ensure that:

- On very hot days children will have reduced exposure to sunlight in the middle of the day.
- Where possible, children can seek shade when outside in the sun.
- Ensure that children will wear a sunhat if provided by the parent.

Please also see our Policy on Hot Weather

Adult/Child Ratios: The adult/child ratio for outdoor play will be in compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, staff will be vigilant about supervising children outdoors.

A rota system is usually practised in relation to classes going outdoors. Where there is exceptionally good weather all children may be outdoors at the same time. In such a situation staff will be cognisant of this fact and give due consideration to the supervision and safety of the children.

We aim that each child spends a minimum of 30 minutes outdoors every day, weather permitting.



Outdoor Programme:

- We will ensure that children have access to a range of outdoor activities to: climb, run, crawl, balance, jump, throw, catch, pour, sort, pretend and access different levels.
- The outdoor programme encourages children to participate in growing vegetables and planting flowers.
- A variety of activities take place outdoors and children can utilise a range of outdoor equipment such as bikes, scooters, balls and skipping ropes.
- The outdoor play area will be safe and scaled to a child's size.
- The outdoor time will be maximised through an intentional, well-planned approach to arranging the space and using the time.
- The programme will create a positive tone supporting a child's natural curiosity in playing outdoors.
- There will be opportunities for children to encounter and interact with each other.
- Children will be given the freedom to select safe materials to use outdoors to build upon their natural sense of exploration.
- The outdoor space offers choices for children.
- The programme will be child-led where active problem solving will be encouraged.
- Children and staff will interact in a relaxed and natural way.

Interactions: Staff should be actively involved with children in their games and activities where appropriate and should not be solely in a supervisory role. Staff should be:

- Talking with children in a variety of ways (conversing, discussing, questioning, modelling and commentating).
- Helping children to find solutions to problems.
- Supporting, encouraging.
- Extending their activities by making extra resources available and providing new ideas.
- Initiating games and activities.
- Joining in games and activities when invited by children.
- Observing, assessing and recording.
- Aware of safety issues.
- Aware of every child's equal right of access to a full outdoor curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated regardless of race, culture, religion, gender or disability.
- Evaluating observations in order to plan appropriate resources and experiences.

Storage: Equipment such as balls, bats, skipping ropes, hula hoops etc should be stored appropriately.

Outdoor Safety:

- The outdoor area and equipment must be well maintained including any equipment in the outdoor area.
- When setting out the equipment each day and during sessions, staff must look out for safety and remove any objects such as cans, bottles etc. which may have been left by others.
- The area should be checked for animal droppings.
- The outdoor area must allow for children to be supervised.
- Staff on duty outdoors must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care, be vigilant at all times and never leave the play area for any reason unless another member of staff has taken over responsibility.
- There must be at least two staff on duty in the outside area.
- It is most important for staff to move around the area constantly so that all areas are adequately supervised. Each person should position him/herself in separate areas so that no area is unsupervised.

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- At the end of the session the areas should be scanned carefully in case children should be left outside unsupervised.
- Hot drinks should not be taken into the outdoor areas.
- Students helping outdoors must never be left in charge of any area.
- All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy removal next day.
- If a child is injured they should be taken indoors by a staff member for treatment as quickly as possible. Both the injured child and staff member should remain within sight of another member of staff while treatment takes place. A floating staff member or another member of staff should replace the staff member treating the injured child in the outdoor area so that supervision of the area is interrupted for as short a period of time as possible.
- Details of the accident must be written up as soon as possible in the Accident/Incident book. The child's parent must be informed of the accident and treatment.
- Students/volunteers may not administer first aid.
- Climbing apparatus should only be set out on the safety surface.
- Children's clothing should be monitored carefully e.g. unfastened shoelaces and buckles, scarves and ties on anoraks which are too long can easily cause accidents, particularly on wheeled toys and climbing equipment.
- If it is necessary for staff to put toys away whilst children are still in the play areas, there must always be at least one other staff supervising remaining children in the area.
- Encourage children always to look before they move on the slide, or when jumping off apparatus; also encourage children to leave space between themselves and the child in front.
- When children are climbing on climbing frames, staff must be continually aware of any risks (e.g. objects left underneath).
- All equipment is risk assessed and children and staff know and understand the rules of use.
- Whenever children carry equipment (clearing away or carrying planks, blocks etc.) they should be taught how to do it and staff should be aware of the risks involved and minimise them to ensure safety.

Risk Play: A natural part of children's physical play involves engaging in play that is challenging and somewhat risky. Providing opportunities for all children to encounter or create uncertainty, unpredictability, and potential hazards as part of their play is extremely beneficial to children's development. This does not mean putting children in danger of serious harm. Good risks and hazards in play provision are those that engage and challenge children, and support their growth, learning and development. These might include being in touch with the natural environment and loose materials that give children the chance to create and destroy constructions using their skill, creativity and imagination. Bad risks and hazards are those that are difficult or impossible for children to assess for themselves, and that have no obvious benefits.

In our setting, we are aware of and alert to possible dangers, while recognising the importance of encouraging young children's sense of exploration and risk-taking. We maintain children's safety, while not unduly inhibiting their risk-taking.



Signed:  **Date:** 8th May 2024

Name: Stuart Buchanan

Person responsible for approving the Policy