



OUTDOOR PLAY POLICY & Woodland Experience

At our Nursery we have our own enclosed outdoor area that we access daily, regardless of the weather. The outside area is an extension of our inside and there is a variety of resources to facilitate learning in all seven areas of the Early Years Curriculum. We aim to provide a fun and enjoyable experience for all children while ensuring they are safe.

We believe children should have the opportunity to be outside in the fresh air, staff are keen to support children in the outdoor area and use the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance to identify and plan for children's learning. Children are able to either be active or enjoy a quiet moment reading a book and ensure that the area is used in all weathers. This helps the children to appreciate different seasons and stimulates sensory awareness. We encourage children to explore the outside environment and encourage risk taking activities to help promote new skills and encourage development. Staff encourages all children to explore outdoors mainly using child initiated play and on occasions adult initiated play.

We ask parents to ensure they provide all weather clothing and footwear for their children to ensure they are protected and there are no barriers to their learning. Scarfs should not be worn for outdoor play as they can easily be caught up in equipment. Sturdy enclosed shoes with a grip should be worn to ensure the safety of children during outdoor play.

We encourage involvement from the children with growing of plants and vegetable which in turn encourages learning and development of the world in which we live. Children are taught about poisonous plants/berries, explaining not to put things in their mouths and washing hands.

During the hot weather, staff of the nursery will apply sun cream provided parents have given consent to do so. (see separate policy)

Water is made available to children during outdoor play and adults encourage/teach children the need to replace fluids in our bodies.

Risk assessments are carried out daily to minimize risk to all children and staff. When new activities or equipment are introduced a full risk assessment will take place, ensuring safe introduction to staff and use by children is included.

Staffing levels for outside play remain that of indoors. Staffs are aware of potential risk ensuring full view of all children at all times, by strategic placing around the outdoor area. A member of staff who is outside will always carry a whistle with them.

Reviewed by:



Woodland Experience

We provide children, from the age of 3 years, with a weekly opportunity to visit a local wooded area to extend their learning.

Using the concept of Forest Schools we build independence, self-esteem and a positive attitude towards learning in children and young people as they explore and experience the natural world for themselves.

A combination of freedom and responsibility is beneficial to children with little confidence or challenging behaviour. Valuable life skills are learnt - communication, team working and responsibility.

Why is Forest School good for children?

- Beneficial for children who learn by 'doing'
- Children involved in Forest School become more responsible for their actions, can calculate risks better and show improved self-confidence.
- A desire for learning is encouraged and transferred back to the classroom
- Forest Schools encourage children to become more active and healthy
- Children develop self-awareness
- Develop better communication skills
- Developing independence
- And much more

What happens at a typical session?

A typical session will often involve many things. It usually begins with the same routine - always getting ready to go outside - dressing in appropriate clothing, wellington boots and waterproofs. The group will gather at a seating circle of logs and catch up with what happened at the last session, what the weather is like, what they plan to do at this session. Sessions usually run for a minimum of one and a half hours, most are two hours, but many last longer.

The children are free to choose amongst many activities; some will have been introduced by the leader, for example bug hunting, mud painting, collecting, and counting. Many are child-initiated and these are as varied as the children and participants involved; some examples include building a dam, creating an assault course, shelter building.

Also we use hand tools to master a variety of tasks with support of the staff, Children can learn how to use the tools and use them to help them with their existing projects/activities - e.g. use a saw to cut wood to the right length to use in a shelter. They can also use the tools to create new activities - e.g. making items from wood - a mallet

Activities using tools can be very simple or take many weeks to complete.

We will have a snack time, before returning to the nursery, to get everyone back together to share what they've been doing. It may also be a good time to have a campfire and heat some water for a hot drink, perhaps cook some food on the fire.

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