Outdoor Play Policy

At Wood Wharf Kindergarten we are committed to the importance of daily outdoor play and the physical development of all children regardless of their age and stage of development. We provide outdoor play in all weathers. We make outdoor activities accessible to children with learning difficulties and disabilities to ensure inclusive use of the outdoor area.

We recognise that children need regular access to outdoor play in order to keep fit and healthy, develop their large and fine motor skills, experience learning in a natural environment and access sunlight in order to absorb vitamin D more effectively.

The outdoor areas, both within the nursery grounds and in the local community have a wealth of experiences and resources which help children to develop in a variety of ways, including independence, exploration and investigative skills, risk taking and self-esteem, all of which support children to develop skills now and for the future.

We ensure all areas are safe and secure through close supervision and the use of robust risk assessments and safety checks. Where possible and appropriate, we plan and encourage play that helps children understand and manage risks. This type of play allows children to explore and find their own boundaries in a safe environment with supportive practitioners. Staff are informed of the importance of safety procedures and are trained appropriately to ensure these procedures are followed effectively.

We obtain parental permission as part if our registration process to seek permission to take children out of the nursery. This includes short outings into the local community. There is more information in the outings policy.

We plan all outdoor play opportunities and outings to complement the indoor activities and provide children with purposeful activities that support and follow individual children’s interests. There is a balance of both adult-led and child-initiated opportunities to enable children to learn and practice new skills, knowledge and behaviours.

We use this policy alongside the following policies to ensure the safety and welfare of children throughout their time outside:

* Health and safety
* Sun care
* Safe care and Practice
* Lost child policy
* Parents and carers as partners
* Supervision of children
* Child Protection
* Outings.

**Garden Supervision Policy**

The benefits of learning outside the classroom are endless. Being outside allows children to express themselves freely and unlike an indoor classroom, there aren’t any space constraints meaning children can jump, shout and explore to their hearts content. The sense of freedom playing outdoors brings is fantastic for a child’s development, both physically and mentally. While being outside is a chance to let the children have some freedom, it is always still important for staff to maintain proper supervision.

Outdoor learning takes place in all weathers, children are required to have weather appropriate clothes for all weathers, outdoor play is a choice and children will be able to choose to play outside as well as stay in the classroom if they prefer.

* All children in our care must be fully supervised at all times by experienced members of staff.
* Staff must be aware of how many children they have in their charge at all times and exactly where these children are.
* All activities must be supervised appropriately bearing in mind the ages and abilities of the children and the complexities of the activity i.e. water play, cutting, climbing, jumping and using the slide.
* Staff must place themselves in the best position to achieve optimum visual supervision when they are outdoors.  Particular areas may require dedicated supervision e.g. the sandpit and slide.
* It is nursery policy to ensure that staff interact with the children without disturbing the flow of free and creative play.
* Staff should remember that free play in the garden is a social experience for the children and not the staff.
* Staff should refrain from sitting on the small benches and flower beds unless directly interacting with children.
* Staff are expected to wear weather appropriate clothing as well as walking boots and waterproof clothing so that they can engage in outdoor play with the children.
* Staff conducting Forest School sessions should ensure that the children are aware of how to use the equipment and staff should always be present to supervise new resources.

The above points must be followed at all times and any breech’s away from this could result in performance management discussions.

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| **This policy was adopted on** | **Signed on behalf of the nursery** | **Date for review** |
| *07/09/2022* | *Heleanna Phair*  | *1 September 2023* |