

Outdoor learning policy

The outdoors offers discovery, experimentation, creativity, freedom, independence, risk taking, responsibility, collaboration, excitement and **adventure!**

A variety of resources are available to the children, and the outdoor layout is given lots of thought with opportunities for children to use effective styles of learning through offering a variety of equipment, including open-ended resources. It's important that children can modify the outdoor environment as they see fit.

Benefits of physical activity for children

1. improves muscle and bone strength
2. to help sleep quality
3. it helps health and fitness
4. it helps maintain healthy weight
5. recommendations are minimum of 60 minutes a day

The outdoors offers:

- interaction opportunities with different vocabulary
- participation and friendships in shared tasks
- problem solving and challenging activities
- investigating through seasonal weather and natural materials
- fantasy imaginative and story based learning
- physical activities running, climbing, pedalling, jumping, throwing and digging
- caring for nature; planting, watering and growing
- emotional learning: relaxation and reflection
- music and sound making
- wildlife and minibeast experiences

Observation and assessment Close observation is essential in order to assess children's ability, ensure appropriate planning and continuity for the outdoor curriculum. Observation outdoors will help build up a holistic picture of individual children's development.

We understand the importance for all children to having access to the outdoor environment. The early years foundation stage guidance states that providers must provide access to an outdoor play area and ensure that outdoor activities are planned and taken on a daily basis unless circumstances make this inappropriate, for example unsafe or extreme weather conditions. Outdoor learning plays a crucial role in helping children make sense of the world around them and grasp the basic concepts of science.

The outdoor environment offers space and therefore is particularly important to those children who learn best through active movement. Young children learn predominantly through their sensory and physical experiences which support their brain development and the creation of their neural networks.

We offer outdoor play areas accessible to everyone to ensure that children with SEND don't have to feel excluded. Being able to play together with their friends in the same environment boosts self esteem.

Outdoor play helps children to grow socially, helping them to develop healthy ways of forming friendships, responding to physical interaction and using their imagination.

Outdoors is a room for learning which is unlimited for all ages

birth to 11 months see, smell, hear sounds as they experience the outdoors they look at sounds they hear. All stimuli will fascinate and intrigue them. Babies can sleep outside in safety and fresh air.

8 to 20 twenty months involve themselves in all there is to offer outside. Child led activities, developing language and social interaction, experience butterflies, leaves, soil, stones, rocks and logs.

16 to 26 months toddlers love to explore and are naturally curious. They enjoy working with different materials, mixing things together. Carrying bowls of muddy water from one place to another offers excitement, coordination and planning

22 to 36 months discovering new materials is important for the developing toddler. They can be observed investigating, organising and working for a purpose with growing confidence. These experiences will build on each other to create continued development.

30 to 50 months enjoy visiting different areas and will happily create their own games and learning experiences. Teacher led activities can focus on curriculum areas together with communication and social skills

40 to 60 months constantly on the go physically. Developing and understanding the world around them by questioning and doing. These children can be independent, yet safe.

Please risk assess the area of the garden you will be using everyday and remove any unsafe or dangerous objects

- before accessing the top garden with the children please lock the gate with the padlock
- an adult is not a passive observer when children are experiencing the outdoors
- staff interact with the children when outside to ensure supervision is maintained
- every staff member in the garden should be vigilant of all children if they're in danger of hurting themselves
- It is most important for staff to move around the garden so that all areas are adequately supervised
- parents should provide appropriate clothing for their child; Waterproofs, wellington boots and hats in colder weather and sun hats on hot days.
- Children should be dressed appropriately depending on the weather and should always wear sun hats and have sun protection cream applied in the summer
- water will be provided for all on hot days
- encourage children to keep sand in the designated sand area
- toys and equipment should be checked for damage when they are set out or tidied away
- Water tray to be emptied at the end of the day
- All garden resources should be clear cleaned with Milton on a regular basis

- Non mobile babies will be taken into the garden in buggies; they will always be fully strapped into the buggies with harnesses
- At the end of every session the garden should be scanned carefully to ensure that no child is being left outside unsupervised the children are then counted in
- staffing ratios outside adhere to the ratio policy within the nursery: 0 to 2 years 3 children to 1 adult, 2 to 3 years 4 children to 1 adult, 3 plus years, 8 children to 1 adult.
- The outdoor ratios flexible when children require nappy changes or toilets as staff may need to leave the area to supervise children. Please ensure that staff support each other in these circumstances.
- Respect should be given for cultural differences, eg some children may need to remain fully clothed even in hot weather
- Children's clothing should be monitored carefully; scarves that are too long can cause accidents particularly on wheeled toys. Scarves should be worn inside coats.
- Tidy or put away all resource sensibly and carefully at the end of your session in the area of the garden you've been using to allow for safe and easy access to the next day or session
- Please cover the sand
- Empty outside bins on a regular basis
- Regularly check first aid box and report any missing items to Michelle, Harri or Paula
- Keep steps clear of leaves which can become slippery when wet
- Check for hazardous or poisonous plants and remove
- Shed doors to remain closed. Children should be discouraged from going inside the shed.
- New equipment and changes to any outside area will require a termly risk assessment

All outside play fixed equipment is checked annually and recommendations are implemented.

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