

10.2 Outdoor Play Policy

At Wonderland Day Nursery we recognise the importance of daily outdoor play and physical development and are committed to ensure all children have daily access regardless of their age and stage of development. Where possible this includes the children having free access to the outdoors allowing them the freedom to choose whether to play indoors or out. We provide an inclusive outdoor play environment with areas for non-mobile children to freely explore. All activities will be made accessible to children with special educational needs and disabilities to ensure all children are able to use the outdoor area freely and independently. We make reasonable adjustments where required, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We go out and play with all children in all weathers (unless it is deemed unsafe).

We understand the vital role that learning outdoors has on children's learning and development as well as the importance of regular access to outdoor play in order to keep fit and healthy, develop children's large and fine motor skills, experience learning in a natural environment and access sunlight to absorb vitamin D more effectively. We also refer to the Chief Medical Officers guidance on physical activity.¹

We take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children through risk assessments whilst balancing the benefits to learning through providing an element of 'risky play.' 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.

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

The nursery will ensure all areas are safe and secure through close supervision and the use of robust risk assessments and safety checks daily. Staff are informed of the importance of these procedures and are trained appropriately to ensure these procedures are followed effectively.

Where possible and appropriate, we plan and encourage play that helps the children understand and manage risks. This allows them to explore and find their own boundaries in a safe environment with support from familiar staff members.

We ensure outdoor play is adequately supervised and we have robust safety checks in place. Parents' permission will be sought before any child leaves the nursery during the day; this includes short outings into the local community. Please refer to the visits and outings policy for further information on this process.

All outdoor play opportunities and outings will complement the indoor activities and provide children with both adult-led and child-initiated opportunities to enable children to learn and practice new skills, knowledge, and behaviours. Where possible and in line with the children's needs, we will also have snacks and meals outdoors. We plan all outdoor play opportunities and outings to complement the early years curriculum. This includes providing children with purposeful activities and quality resources that support and follow their individual interests and the seven areas of learning and development. We plan both adult-led and child-initiated opportunities to enable children to learn

Where activities take place away from the nursery setting (e.g., local parks) then a nursery mobile phone and a first aid kit will be taken to always ensure the safety of the children. A trained paediatric first aider will be present whilst away from the setting.

The nursery will use this policy alongside the following policies to ensure the safety and welfare of children throughout their time outside.

- Health and safety - general policy
- Sun care policy
- Caring for Babies and toddlers policy
- Missing child from nursery policy
- Missing child from outings policy

- Parents and carers as partners policy
- Supervision of children policy
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Visits and outings policy