



## **Outdoor Play Policy**

At Little Explorers Day Nursery and Preschool, we recognise that high quality outdoor play is essential to children's health, wellbeing, learning, and development. We are committed to ensuring that all children have daily access to outdoor play in a safe, stimulating, and inclusive environment.

Outdoor play is viewed as an integral part of our curriculum and provides rich opportunities for children to explore, investigate, take appropriate risks, and develop key skills across all areas of learning in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Where possible, we provide free flow access between indoor and outdoor environments, enabling children to make independent choices about where and how they play.

### **Curriculum Intent for Outdoor Learning**

Our outdoor provision is carefully planned to support our curriculum intent. Through outdoor play, we aim to:

- Promote physical development, including gross and fine motor skills, coordination, and strength
- Support communication and language through open-ended play, storytelling, and social interaction
- Encourage personal, social and emotional development, including confidence, resilience, and independence
- Provide opportunities for exploration and investigation of the natural world
- Foster curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking
- Support children to develop an understanding of risk, safety, and boundaries

Outdoor experiences are planned to complement and enhance learning across all seven areas of the EYFS using our outdoor nursery grounds and local community to provide a rich variety of experiences.

### **The Value of Outdoor Learning**

We understand the vital role outdoor play has in supporting children's development. Time spent outdoors offers opportunities to:

- Stay fit and healthy
- Develop gross and fine motor skills
- Experience learning in a natural environment
- Access sunlight to support Vitamin D absorption
- Develop confidence, independence, and risk assessment skills
- Explore, investigate, and engage in imaginative play

- Build self-esteem and resilience

## **Inclusion and Equal Access**

We are committed to ensuring that outdoor play is fully inclusive and accessible to all children.

We:

- Make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010
- Adapt activities, resources, and the environment to meet individual needs, including for children with SEND or medical needs
- Carry out individual risk assessments where required
- Use visual supports, alternative equipment, and differentiated approaches to ensure all children can participate fully.

## **Weather and Environmental Conditions**

Outdoor play is encouraged in most weather conditions. However, children's safety and wellbeing remain paramount.

Staff carry out dynamic risk assessments to determine whether it is safe to access the outdoor environment.

We ensure:

- Children are dressed appropriately for the weather (e.g. coats, waterproofs, hats, gloves, sun hats)
- Sunscreen is applied in line with parental consent and sun safety procedures
- Access to shade and drinking water is available in hot weather
- Exposure to cold weather is monitored carefully
- Outdoor play is restricted during extreme or unsafe conditions, such as:
  - High winds or storms
  - Ice or unsafe surfaces
  - Extreme heat where safe provision cannot be maintained

## **Safety, Supervision and Risk Management**

Children's safety is a priority at all times.

We ensure:

- Daily risk assessments of outdoor areas and equipment are completed before use
- Ongoing dynamic risk assessments are carried out during play
- Staff are deployed effectively to supervise all areas, including entrances, climbing equipment, and 'blind spots'
- EYFS staff-to-child ratios are maintained at all times
- Clear lines of sight and communication between staff are maintained
- Regular headcounts are conducted and recorded where appropriate

We support children to engage in managed risk taking (risky play), recognising that this is essential for developing confidence, resilience, and problem solving skills. Staff support children to assess and manage risks safely.

### **Hygiene and Infection Control**

We promote good hygiene practices during outdoor play by:

- Ensuring children wash their hands before and after outdoor activities
- Cleaning and maintaining outdoor equipment regularly
- Managing sand, water, and mud play in line with infection control procedures
- Ensuring appropriate hygiene is maintained when eating outdoors

### **Equipment and Environment**

We provide a high-quality outdoor environment that is:

- Safe, secure, and regularly maintained
- Stimulating and rich in opportunities for exploration and learning
- Equipped with a range of age-appropriate and developmentally suitable resources
- Organised to allow children to access resources independently

Outdoor spaces include designated areas for:

- Non-mobile babies to explore safely
- Physical play and climbing
- Quiet and reflective play
- Creative and imaginative experiences

### **Community Outings and Offsite Activities**

We value the importance of extending learning beyond the nursery environment.

For all outings:

- Written parental consent is obtained
- A full risk assessment is completed
- A nursery mobile phone, first aid kit, and emergency contact details are taken
- A paediatric first aider is present
- Staff maintain appropriate ratios and supervision at all times
- Children are counted regularly, including before departure, during the outing, and on return

In the event of a concern, procedures outlined in the Lost Child Policy will be followed immediately.

### **Food, Rest and Outdoor Experiences**

Where appropriate, children may:

- Enjoy snacks and meals outdoors

- Access outdoor sleep/rest opportunities (in line with our Sleep Policy)

All such practices are carefully risk assessed and supervised.

### **Staff Responsibilities**

All staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring children are safe, supervised, and supported outdoors
- Following risk assessment and safety procedures
- Promoting inclusive practice
- Supporting children’s learning and development through high-quality interactions
- Encouraging independence and safe risk-taking

Staff receive ongoing training and support to ensure high standards of outdoor provision.

### **Supporting Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy
- Managing Extreme Weather Policy
- Outings Policy
- Lost Child Policy
- Infection Control Policy
- Sleep Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects current legislation, guidance, and best practice, including updates to the EYFS.

<b>This policy was adopted on</b>	<b>Reviewed</b>
24/01/2022	4th May 2026