

Outdoor Play

At Smithfield House Children's Nursery, we recognise the importance of daily outdoor play and physical development and are committed to ensuring all children have daily access regardless of their age or 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. We make reasonable adjustments where required, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We go out to 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 in order to absorb vitamin D more effectively.

We also refer to the Chief Medical Officers guidance on physical activity.¹

The outdoor areas used by our nursery, in the local community, have a wealth of experiences and resources, which help children to learn and 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 take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children through close supervision, the use of robust risk assessments and safety checks, including regular head counts. 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 before any child leaves the nursery during the day. This includes short outings into the local community. There is more information in the Visits and Outings policy.

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 and practice new skills, knowledge and behaviours. Where possible and in line with the children's needs we will also often have snacks and meals outdoors and some children will sleep outdoors (see Sleep policy).

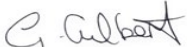
Where activities take place away from the setting (e.g. in the local park) then a nursery mobile phone and first aid kit will be taken to ensure the safety of children at all times. All staff are trained in paediatric first aid.

We 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
- Caring for babies and toddlers
- Missing child from nursery
- Missing child from outings

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/physical-activity-guidelines>

- Managing extreme weather
- Parents as partners
- Supervision of children
- Safeguarding children and child protection
- Visits and outings.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
October 2024		Annually - unless changes to legislation