



Outdoor Play Policy

Policy Name:	Outdoor Play Policy
Adopted By:	Louise Farrow-Brookes
Next Review Date:	12/12/2026



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1. Policy Overview

Outdoor learning has a positive impact on the child's well-being, learning and development. This is achieved when a child is given the support of an adult who is enthusiastic about outdoor learning experiences and understands the importance of the environment.

The Statutory Framework states, "providers must provide access to an outdoor play area or, if that is not possible ensure that outdoor activities are planned and taken on a daily basis."

We aim for our nurseries to gain annual Sun Safe Accreditation status from skin cancer charity SKCIN.

All "Manager" responsibilities and actions referred to throughout the policy would usually be undertaken by the most senior person in charge, in the absence of the Nursery Manager.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Manager and staff must ensure that all children have access to the outdoors every day and, where possible, are able to move freely between the indoor and outdoor environment.
- 2.2 The Manager and staff must make parents/carers aware that children will have the opportunity to access the outdoors every day unless it is unsafe to do so. Children should have all-weather clothing left at nursery.
- 2.3 The Manager and all staff must ensure that relevant risk assessments and documentation are completed in line with company policy.
- 2.4 The Manager must ensure appropriate clothing is worn by staff and children for all-weather access to the outdoors. Staff should inform parents of under 2s to provide waterproof clothing, as children may get their clothes wet during wet, colder months. Sites should hold a suitable level of puddle suits and spare wellies.
- 2.5 All staff must ensure appropriate and challenging activities and experiences are planned every day to meet children's individual needs and development.
- 2.6 Staff must remain vigilant, and all children must always remain in sight and/or sound during outdoor play.
- 2.7 Staff must be active, responsive and engaged with the children's learning at all times during outdoor play.

3. Procedures

Staff must:

- 3.1 Complete the Garden Checklist before children enter the outdoor area to eliminate and report any risks or hazards identified. This includes water, rubbish and foreign objects that may have entered the garden overnight or during a garden closure.
- 3.2 Remain vigilant throughout the day, completing regular visual checks of the outdoor area to eliminate and report any risks or hazards identified.
- 3.3 Ensure children's Critical Care Plan boxes are taken outdoors in the designated Critical Care Plan rucksack.
- 3.4 Ensure there is fresh drinking water available at all times in the outdoor area. This may depend on the time of year and the length of time outside; in warmer weather this is essential.
- 3.5 Record on the Family app how many children are in attendance overall, how many children and staff are indoors, and how many are outdoors. Staff must complete a headcount on the Family app at each transition. If children are free-flowing to the outdoor area, the indoor and outdoor areas must be treated as a whole, including effective staff deployment.
- 3.6 Be aware of their responsibilities to supervise and support all children. Supporting children to transition outside should start in good time, including asking children if they need the toilet and ensuring children are prepared and understand the transition from inside to outside.
- 3.7 Count children out of the room as they leave, and recheck the number when they arrive in the outdoor area. Children must also be counted at key points such as the top/bottom of stairs or through doors.
- 3.8 Give thought and attention to outdoor areas to provide opportunities for children to:
 - Be excited, energetic, adventurous, noisy and messy
 - Observe and interact with nature and the changing seasons
 - Imagine, dream and invent
 - Create, construct and deconstruct
 - Investigate, analyse, predict and record
 - Make sounds and music, express ideas and feelings
 - Find patterns, make marks and explore different media and materials
 - Be active; run, climb, jump, crawl and throw
 - Dig, grow, nurture and cultivate

- Hide, relax, find calm and reflect
- Have responsibility, be independent and collaborate with others

4. Sun Protection

Skin cancer is one of the most common cancers in the UK. Most skin cancers are caused by the sun's UV radiation, but the risk can be reduced by adopting measures to protect the individual.

A child's skin is 15 times more delicate than an adult's and therefore more easily damaged.

Sunburn in childhood can double the risk of skin cancer; the damage will not be immediately obvious because skin cancer can take years to develop.

- 4.1.1 During the child's registration, parents/carers must be advised to provide suitable clothing for sunny weather. In exceptionally sunny weather, if children are not suitably dressed and alternative clothing is not available, they will be prevented from accessing the outside area.
- 4.1.2 Children will be expected to wear hats which are wide brimmed, fitted with a peak or preferably the legionnaire style, providing neck cover. Children may also wear UV protective sunglasses.
- 4.1.3 Staff will lead by example by wearing appropriate clothing, hats and sunglasses.
- 4.1.4 Parents/carers must be asked and reminded to apply sunscreen before attending nursery.
- 4.1.5 Parents/carers must give written consent for sun protection control measures to be implemented and for sunscreen to be applied on the child's registration form. There will be no expectations regarding the application of sun cream to children due to harm caused to unprotected skin.
- 4.1.6 Parents/carers should be kept informed on the importance of sun protection, this policy, the nursery's risk assessment(s) and the sun protection measures in place at the nursery via the Parent Information Sun Letter given to them in their starter pack.
- 4.1.7 Babies under six months will not have sunscreen applied and must be kept out of direct strong sunlight, in line with NHS guidance. They must always be in the shade when outside and on walks, and be covered with light appropriate clothing.

5. Daily Sun Protection Procedures

Sunscreen is used as a last line of defence but will be used to protect exposed areas of skin of every child to enable them to access the outdoors without risk of skin damage.

- 5.1.1 During hot and sunny weather, the Management must risk assess whether it is safe to access the outdoors, particularly during the hours of 11 am and 3 pm. Consideration must also be given to the pollen count and whether the UV level may affect individual children's medical conditions.
- 5.1.2 Staff must understand the importance of sun protection and the risk of inadequate protection, especially during the at-risk months of April to September.

- 5.1.3 The Manager must provide a minimum of SPF 30 sun protection for all staff working outdoors with the children. Sunscreen must be suitably labelled "staff", and must be nut-free, hypoallergenic and water resistant. Staff are responsible for ensuring they are adequately protected.
- 5.1.4 Sunscreen (minimum SPF 30, nut-free, hypoallergenic and water resistant) will be provided by the nursery. If parents/carers provide their own, it must be suitably labelled with the child's full name and the date the product was received and first opened. The sunscreen must be a minimum of SPF 30, nut-free, hypoallergenic and water resistant.
- 5.1.5 Any sunscreen provided by a parent/carer will be returned or discarded after 12 months from the date of opening.
- 5.1.6 Staff must ensure sunscreen is administered to all children before accessing the outside area, and sunscreen must be reapplied at regular intervals in line with the manufacturer's guidance. This must be recorded on the child's Family app profile by selecting apply cream and entering the factor and time.
- 5.1.7 Staff must wear disposable gloves if applying different sunscreen to different children. Older children should be encouraged to apply sunscreen for themselves under close supervision of an adult.
- 5.1.8 Where free-flow play is in place and the child can access a sun-filled outdoor area at will, they must be reminded of sun protection messages and told to wear hats, sunglasses if available, keep covered up and play in the shade where possible.
- 5.1.9 Staff should recognise and use opportunities to discuss the importance of protecting the skin against the sun's effects with the children.

5.2 Shade

- 5.2.1 Where reasonably practicable, shade will be provided in outdoor play areas. These may take the form of:
- Trees
 - Shade structures such as gazebos, sails and garden houses
 - Seats and equipment moved into shaded areas of outdoor spaces
- 5.2.2 All staff must notify the relevant Manager of any incident involving adverse exposure to the sun's UV radiation.
- 5.2.3 The Manager must ensure any child harmed by exposure to the sun's rays is given appropriate immediate and ongoing first aid treatment as far as practicable.
- 5.2.4 The Manager must ensure an Incident Form is completed via Family and reported to the Area Manager. A Serious Incident Report (Appendix 1) must be completed and submitted to the Area Manager within 48 hours of the incident.

6. Additional Supporting Information

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
- Lost and Missing Child Policy
- Parents as Partners Policy
- Child Supervision Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy
- Visits and Outings Policy

Appendix

Appendix	Description
1	Serious Incident Report

Review History

Date Approved	Reviewed By
03/01/2023	Louise Farrow-Brookes
12/12/2025	Louise Farrow-Brookes

Appendix 1: Serious Incident Report

Nursery Name:	EY Number:
Child's Full Name:	Child's DOB:
Date of Incident/Accident:	Time of Incident/Accident:
Date Reported to Area Manager:	Date Reported to Ofsted:
Date RIDDOR Reported:	

Full names and positions of any staff involved in the incident/accident and in investigation which followed:

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Details of Incident/Accident, including dates and times of how things occurred:

Any actions taken by the nursery straight after the incident/accident, such as first aid given, contact with parents, advice given to/by parents, emergency services contact, contact with LADO and contact with Area Manager:

Further actions taken by the nursery because of the incident/accident, such as changes to risk assessments, identified needs for staff training including dates of training, dates of investigations and disciplinary procedures, including outcomes and accident report to RIDDOR with dates: