



Play Policy

Play is a fundamental aspect of a child's overall development; it is a critical factor in enriching learning and development. The nursery acknowledges the importance of play within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and incorporates play as a key element of the learning experience. The nursery environment is developed using natural resources such as wooden blocks, pine cones and other open ended resources avoiding too much plastic. This is purposeful to help develop and inspire the children's creativity and imagination during their play.

Children will be encouraged and supported to take part in various planned and unplanned activities and experiences; however they will never be forced.

The nursery aims to ensure that:

- Play activities are freely chosen and the nursery will help to ensure that play is fun and enjoyable for children.
- All children have access to a balanced range of play with access to both the indoor and outdoor areas for the majority of the day.
- The nursery listens to children and aims to meet their needs in an inclusive way.
- The nursery recognises the need for play opportunities to be challenging whilst free from unnecessary hazards.
- The nursery reviews practices and resources to establish how children can best be supported in their play.
- Staff create an environment that fosters opportunities for play.
- Play is used to support and develop our planning to extend children's learning experiences. It is important for us to recognise the diversity and complexity of children's play and use our skills and observations to extend children's learning.
- Our role as practitioners is to enable rather than direct the child in accordance with EYFS recommendations.
- The nursery helps and supports parents/carers to understand the value of play in the overall development of children.

Outdoor learning

- The nursery believes that outdoor learning is essential to children's health, development and well-being.
- Outdoor learning compliments indoor learning and is equally important. Play and learning that flow seamlessly between indoors and outdoors enables children to make the most of resources and materials available to them and develop their ideas without unnecessary interruption. Consequently, it is vital that as an early years setting the nursery maximises the children's opportunities outdoors.
- The outdoor learning environment is planned so that all seven areas of learning specified in the Early Years Foundation Stage can be met through play.
- The nursery aims to use our whole environment as an extension to our indoor classrooms so the children can freely use both indoors and outdoors. Statistics show that children are happiest when outside and thrive in the natural environment.
- Our outdoor areas are fully risk assessed and are checked on a daily basis. Staff follow correct procedures i.e. staff/child ratios, making sure areas are safe, monitoring play, etc.



- The nursery asks that all parents/carers be aware of our outdoor learning philosophy and dress their children appropriately for the weather conditions.
- Observations are made on the children's learning developments whilst playing outside.
- The nursery encourages parents/carers to talk to their child's Key Person or Senior Early Years Educator if they have any concerns about outside play.

Forest Schools

Forest school sessions offer the chance to take learning out of the classroom and into the great outdoors. Children are given an opportunity to learn in a new way and within a new environment. **Forest school** introduces a whole new dimension to teaching and learning, with new experiences for both the children and teachers.

Forest schools promote the opportunity to develop skills to manage risks and attempt new challenges they would not face in a classroom, such as tree climbing and campfires and den making. This adds a sense of excitement and adventure for the children, who are free to explore and manipulate the environment around them using all of their senses. The weather (unless extreme) has no impact upon forest schools, the children will still be outside making the most of the experience.

- We take the children out and use our campus as a base for Forest Schools.
- The children will engage in activities that are fully risk assessed
- The staff ; child ratio will reflect the nature of the activities that are available and therefore the group size will be reduced
- Staff leading forest schools will be qualified or training to level 3 in forest schools teaching.
- Children are expected to wear waterproof clothing in the winter and be dressed in appropriate footwear at all times.
- A first aid kit and mobile phone will be accessible at every forest school session.