



Health and Safety

Outdoor Policy (Incorporating Forest School)

Policy statement

At Rainbow's End Pre-School we strongly believe that being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of children's development. (EYFS Enabling Environments)

We believe outdoor play is an integral part of a child's learning and development and, as recommended by the EYFS, we operate a free-flow system where children can move freely between our indoor and outdoor spaces. Our aim is to provide children with enriching outdoor play experiences in line with the five principles of Forest Childcare in a safe and secure environment.

Procedures

Health and Safety

Risk assessments of the equipment and environment are undertaken and regularly reviewed. Staff ensure the outdoor play area is safe and secure. A regular health and safety inspection of the area is conducted along with secured gates to prevent children leaving the area and unauthorised persons from entering. All the outside equipment is suitable for the children's ages, needs and abilities. The outside environment is checked every day for litter, faeces and any objects that may be harmful.

Staffing

Children playing outside are always supervised by staff. Our outside adult: child ratios are set according to the individual needs of the children playing outside.

Activities

In our outdoor environment, children have opportunities to explore all areas of learning and development identified by the EYFS through a balance of planned adult-led activities and their own child-initiated play. Children are encouraged and supported by staff to take challenges and to start to assess risks for themselves. The children's interests are followed and supported through our portable continuous provision which enables children to move their play between the indoor and outdoor environments. Staff observe and record children's learning and play interests to inform our planning and ensure that we are meeting their individual needs.

Forest School

We are lucky enough to be able to access our own Forest School for sessions throughout the year, traditionally we take the school leavers for weekly sessions into our own private woodland area to play, explore and discover the natural wonders of the environment.

Forest School is risk assessed before each session to make sure the area is safe and possible dangers are identified. Children are encouraged to take risks and manage their own safety at forest school, however some boundaries are put into place and children are supported to adhere to these. Toileting may take place outside in a secluded area to reduce the impact on the playtime of children. Drinks and snacks are provided as well as hand-washing facilities. Children are appropriately dressed for forest school and are helped to dress before leaving the setting. Parents are asked to provide suitable clothing and warm boots, we are able to provide waterproof all-in-one suits and wellington boots if required.

The only time we may not go to a forest school session is if the wind levels are high and the risk from falling branches is increased.

Please see our Forest School handbook for further details on risk assessments, the benefits of risky play and the principles that we adhere to.

All weathers

As much as we can, we encourage all children to play outside. We therefore request you provide the following named items;

- Waterproof coat or rain Mac
- Sun cream
- Sun hats
- Spare Clothes
- Children should be appropriately dressed for all weather conditions to allow for a more contented outdoor play time.

Sun Safe Award - Reviewed Annually in April

Appropriate shade and cover is provided to allow children refuge from some weather conditions. Outdoor drinks are allowed in the outdoor play area and access is provided to toilets at all times. The need for sun protection is discussed interactively with the children. Parents and carers are informed of the importance of sun protection through newsletters. Shaded areas are made full use of when activities are planned outside. A stock of spare hats is available for children.

As outdoor play is part of our sessional routine it is necessary that:

- MORNING SESSION CHILDREN should have their sun cream applied prior to arrival at pre-school at the setting for 9.15am.
- CHILDREN WHO STAY ALL DAY should have 8 hour sun cream applied before arrival at pre-school for 9.15am.
- All children should be dressed sensibly in hot weather to cover sensitive areas, shoulders must always be covered.

Legal framework Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2012)

Further guidance: Five steps to Risk Assessment (HSE 2006) Sun Safe Award - www.sunsafenurseries.co.uk

The Five Principles of Forest Childcare <http://www.kidstogo.co.uk/childminders/forestchildcare.html#Principles>

Policy Review

As part of Rainbows End Pre-School monitoring of child protection and safeguarding this policy will be subject to periodic review.

Policy adopted by: Rainbow's End Pre-School
Date: 01.01.2024
Policy Review Date: 31.12.2024 (or sooner if required)