

## 21 Outdoor Policy

All children at summertime will be given opportunities to access the outdoor environment through free-flow play.

We have a natural area with a mud kitchen where they can hunt for minibeasts and enjoy exploring the garden, playing in the sand, smelling, and feeling the textures around them, and making mud pies. We also offer a wide range of physical equipment, such as climbing frames, bikes and balls.

Babies access the outdoors during the morning and afternoon sessions and are encouraged to sleep outside in the evacuation cots during good weather.

### **We will endeavour to encourage all children by providing:**

- Knowledgeable and enthusiastic adults, who are crucial to unlocking the potential of the outdoors
- Rich environments that are full of stimulating and challenging experiences where children can take risks while learning to be safe.
- An area that is dynamic, flexible and versatile where the child has the freedom to make their own choices, and develop harmonious relationships with others, through negotiation, taking turns and cooperation.
- Opportunities to promote a sense of confidence and well being, support and develop healthy and active lifestyles.
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We do our best to keep your child clean BUT this is not always possible even if they are wearing waterproofs/aprons and wellington boots, so please only dress them in clothing you are happy for them to play in.

### **Staffing outside**

Staff will be deployed around the garden when the children are outside.

Staff will be responsible for ensuring the safety of **all** the children within the setting and will need to be extra vigilant when at the water tray/paddling pool outside and ensure that other staff are aware if they need to go inside for anything. This is to ensure that ratios can be maintained, and staff and children are safeguarded.

**Risk assessments** are ongoing ensuring the main gates are always locked/bolted so that children cannot open them. The area is constantly checked for rubbish or dangerous toys/equipment. Risk of harm on climbing frames etc is minimised by ensuring that there is adequate supervision, correct positioning of the equipment and some 'rules' set by adults that are appropriate for the individual child's level of understanding.

**Risky play** At Summertime we believe there is a huge difference between putting a child at risk and allowing a child to take risks. Within the structure of health and safety, we must always remember that risk-taking is a very important part of a child's development. There is always a risk that some children will fall, however it is important that children are able to expand their skills, as they risk climbing higher, reaching further, or balancing for longer. Children will also learn how to fall, how to pick themselves up and start over again. Equally importantly, they will begin to understand the consequence of taking risks beyond their current ability.

Cathy White  
Manager  
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