



The Oak Partnership

EYFS Outdoor Play Policy

We are committed to safeguarding and ensuring the health, safety and well-being of all pupils in accordance with safeguarding procedures and guidance for staff outlined in the schools' Health and Safety, Child Protection, Security and Safeguarding policies.

EYFS Outdoor Play Policy

Document Information

	Information		
Document author:	COO in consultation with Early Years Strategic Lead & Nursery Managers		
Review by:			
Approved by:	Executive Team	Date	04/05/2020
Adopted by:	Woodlands Nursery Little Herons Nursery All EYFS settings across the Trust		
Publication date:	2020		
Review date:	September 2025		
Review schedule:	Annual		
Distribution:	Little Herons & Ruishton Website		
Document status:	Version 5.0		

Version Control

Version	Issue Date	Amended by	Comments
1.0	Sep 2020	GM EYSL	New Nursery policy
2.0	Sep 2021	GM EYSL	Review – no update
3.0	Sep 2022	GM EYSL	Reviewed – no update
4.0	Jan 2023	GM EYLS	Reviewed- no update
5.0	Sep 2024	GM EYSL	Reviewed – no update
6.0	May 2025	GM EYSL	Updated in line with Key model policy

Contents

1.Aims	3
2.Legislation and Statutory Responsibilities	3
3.Roles and Responsibilities.....	3

4.Equal Opportunities	3
5.The Outdoor Environment	3
8.Planning for Outdoor Play.....	4
9.Learning Opportunities Outdoors.....	4
10 .Safety Procedures	5
11.Observation and Assessment.....	5

1.Aims

At The Trust Oak Partnership, we recognise outdoor play as an essential and integral part of the EYFS curriculum.

We aim to:

- Support children’s intellectual, emotional, social, and physical development through outdoor learning.
- Provide children with a stimulating environment rich in language and physical activity.
- Foster curiosity, creativity, exploration, and engagement with the natural world.
- Promote a healthy, active lifestyle.

2.Legislation and Statutory Responsibilities

This policy is underpinned by the following statutory documents and guidance:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004

3.Roles and Responsibilities

- The Early Years Strategic Lead is responsible for coordinating outdoor provision, supporting planning promoting high-quality practice.
- EYFS staff are responsible for supervising children, planning purposeful outdoor activities, completing risk assessments, and ensuring children’s safety and wellbeing.
- All staff must contribute to the ongoing evaluation and enhancement of the outdoor environment.
- Parents and volunteers may support but must never be left in sole charge of children.

4.Equal Opportunities

We are committed to ensuring equality of access and inclusion in outdoor play:

- All children, regardless of gender, ability, cultural background or additional needs, are given equal access to outdoor learning opportunities.
- Differentiated resources and adult support ensure every child can participate safely and meaningfully.

5.The Outdoor Environment

The Trust Oak Partnership provides a well-resourced and structured outdoor area that supports holistic development. Features include:

- Large physical play apparatus (e.g., climbing equipment, tricycles)
- Creative and sensory play areas (e.g., sand, water, messy play)
- Natural resources (e.g., leaves, sticks, soil)
- Literacy and numeracy resources for outdoor mark-making and games

- Role play and small world resources
- Secure perimeter fencing for safety

8.Planning for Outdoor Play

Planning outdoor provision must:

- Reflect children's interests and the EYFS areas of learning
- Include opportunities for solitary, parallel, and cooperative play
- Promote the acquisition of new skills, knowledge, and positive attitudes
- Ensure appropriate deployment of staff and use of resources
- Include adjustments to meet the needs of all learners
- Be flexible to allow for spontaneous exploration

9.Learning Opportunities Outdoors

Prime Areas

- Communication and Language
- Exposure to diverse environmental sounds Opportunities for storytelling, singing, and performance
- Enhancement of muscle control for speech and handwriting development

Physical Development

- Space for vigorous movement, climbing, balancing, and coordination
- Understanding personal health and safety
- Use of tools and equipment in real-life contexts

Personal, Social, and Emotional Development

- Fosters independence, risk assessment, and resilience
- Provides shared experiences to develop empathy, turn-taking, and negotiation
- Builds self-esteem and responsibility through nature care and challenge

Specific Areas

Literacy

- Access to books, storytelling props, and outdoor mark-making tools
- Use of phonics and visual displays to support early reading

Mathematics

- Use of natural materials for sorting, counting, and pattern-making
- Practical applications of number and measurement concepts

Understanding the World

- First-hand exploration of living things, weather, and seasonal change
- Development of geographical and technological awareness
- Observing growth cycles and changes in the natural environment

Expressive Arts and Design

- Opportunities for imaginative role play, movement, and music
- Use of natural and open-ended materials for art and construction
- Development of design thinking and critical exploration

10 .Safety Procedures

- Daily risk assessments conducted by staff before outdoor access
- Staff vigilance and appropriate adult-to-child ratios at all times
- Safe and orderly storage of resources
- Suitable clothing for weather conditions, including sun hats and sun cream in summer
- Prohibition of hot drinks unless risk-assessed
- Staff mobility across the space to ensure constant supervision
- First aid incidents dealt with promptly, documented, and communicated to parents
- Teaching children to manage equipment and assess personal limits safely

11.Observation and Assessment

Outdoor observations contribute to building a holistic understanding of each child's development.

- Practitioners assess children's abilities, interests, and progress through active observation
- Observations inform planning and support individualised learning
- Documentation of learning outdoors is used to track development in line with EYFS goals