

Outdoor Play Policy and Procedures

Aston University Nursery is committed to providing the children with the opportunity to further their learning and development both in the indoors and outdoors environment. The policy and the benefits of outdoor play will be explained to the parents as part of the nursery induction process.

The Outdoors provides opportunities for the following:

- Development of physical skills, gross motor, spatial awareness and use of equipment
- Health benefits gained from high energy activity (raising heart rate)
- Social interaction through negotiation and interactive play
- Communication skills (talking about what they are doing/ what they want to do))
- Emotional skills learning resilience dealing with challenge and risk.
- Knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- Creative and imaginative play.

Aston University Nursery believe it is essential that all children have daily access to the outdoors whether this be through use of the garden or through outings and trips.

All children will be accessing the garden in all weathers. Parents are required to send suitable outdoor clothing for their child every day. The type of clothing sent needs to reflect the weather. Staff will ensure that children are appropriately dressed before allowing them to play outdoors. Children who do not have the appropriate clothing may not be able to access the garden and will therefore miss out on some key learning opportunities and we will work with parents to rectify this situation. The nursery supplies wet suits for the children to use in wet and muddy weather, however these are designed to be worn over the top of children's outdoor clothing and not provide warmth.

It is not possible to refuse a child access to the garden and the rooms are designed to allow free access between the two environments. The only exception would be for a child with a care plan, where medical advice has recommended limited or restricted time outside. Having a cough or cold is not a reason for children to not go outside:

*One myth is that **cold** weather **can** make you **sick**, but that is not true. **Being cold** itself does not cause illness, but when it is colder **outside**, **children** tend to spend more time indoors together, easily passing germs and infections*

As the outdoor environment is an integral part of the nursery day if a parent feels that their child is too unwell to go outside then they are deemed not well enough to be at nursery.

Children are never forced to go outside and whilst we encourage all children to make the most of the outdoors those who are old enough will be able to make their own decisions.

Staff will monitor younger children closely and respond accordingly if they appear unhappy in being outside or appear to want or need to be inside.

Delivery of Outdoor Sessions:

- Outdoor time should be planned around the development needs and interests of the children. Staff will need to provide free play opportunities as well as some structured group activities throughout the day.
- Staff should be active and model movement for the children, they should promote fun and enjoyment in moving as well as health benefits.
- The environment should be set up to ensure that there is a range of physically active opportunities as well as interactive purposeful play.
- The environment should enable the development of skills through selected equipment and activities. (eg. if the focus is on developing aiming there would need to be things to a range of objects to throw/kick and targets to aim at)
- The activities and equipment should be appropriate for the children's age and stage of development.
- There should be opportunities for challenge and to teach children about risk.
- Children must be supervised closely when using any equipment in the garden. Staff must make a risk assessment of the equipment in relation to the children using it and take appropriate actions to support development and minimise risk.
- Staff will need to be able to adapt activities to ensure that all children have positive movement experiences and achieve success, through effective differentiation.
- Staff should promote the value of outdoor play
- Promote self-care opportunities
- Support strategies for fair play
- Ensure that all children have access to positive and purposeful outdoor play.

Procedure for use of garden:

- Before anyone takes any children into the garden they should perform the garden checking routine. Staff should wear protective aprons and gloves and carry a carrier bag to use to dispose of any litter or other unsuitable object discovered whilst checking the garden. All checks are recorded on the garden check records kept in all care rooms.
- If you find a syringe needle in the garden please report immediately to Campus Safety on 4803 who will remove this safely. DO NOT attempt to remove it yourself.
- The garden perimeter must be checked to ensure the security of the area.
- Ratios must be maintained at all times whilst using the garden or operating free flow
- The resources being used within the garden must be checked to determine if they appropriate for the age and stage of the children using the area
- Children must be supervised closely when using any equipment in the garden. Staff must make a risk assessment of the equipment in relation to the children using it and take appropriate actions to minimise the risk.
- Staff must make regular headcounts when using the Nursery garden and must check children against the register once re-entering the nursery
- Sand and water used in the garden must be covered securely when not in use. This should be checked thoroughly prior to use
- Registers must be taken into the garden with the children
- Children must not have access to the sheds or storage units
- Staff must bear in mind that fire exits need to remain clear when the garden is in use.
- The garden must be tidied after use and all equipment stored safely

Internal use only

This policy was adopted on	June 22
Signed on behalf of the nursery	
Date disseminated to staff	
Date for review	June 23