



DAY NURSERY AND PRE-SCHOOL
83 - 85 Hall Road
Hull
Tel: (01482) 470535

Outdoor Play Policy

At Little Acorns we constantly strive to provide a secure, stimulating, and positive environment for all children. Each child's abilities, talents and skills can be developed to reach their potential. Our wonderful curriculum is embedded by our skilled, motivated and caring practitioners".

- All children have access to the garden at least twice a day for an hour minimum of active play.
- Children should wear appropriate clothing, warm coats, gloves etc in winter and sunscreen and hats in the summer, these must be provided by the child's parent/carer as children will go outside in all weathers.
- Staff must ensure resources are well maintained and report or dispose of any worn/unsuitable play equipment.
- Staff to children ratio's must be maintained for outdoor play.
- A wide variety of activities must be provided which interest and extend children's learning.
- The use of equipment should be encouraged to maximise opportunities for 'real life experiences.
- The use of large bikes, trikes and scooters should be encouraged to promote physical play and gross motor skills.
- Staff must ensure indoor activities can be extended to outdoors
- Outdoor play activities should cover all seven areas of learning.
- Activities should be varied and interesting to stimulate the children's interest.
- Children should be encouraged to use the equipment appropriately. i.e. not throwing equipment that could hurt another child or become damaged.

- The garden should allow children to ‘take risks’ in a safe environment.
 - Children will be encouraged to risk assess their own play.
 - The setting will provide all-in-one wet suits for wet weather and to protect the children’s clothing. At no time will a child be forced to wear one if they choose not to.
-
- ‘Forest school’ work will be carried out with the children either at the setting or at alternative locations (see nursery outings policy). Children will be encouraged to explore the natural world around them.
 - Children will be encouraged to explore the effects of exercise on their bodies.
 - If the garden can’t be used indoor physical activities will be provided.

Benefits of outdoor play in all weathers

During the cooler months, it is common for children to be restricted to indoor play at home, and only permitted to play outdoors when it is warm and sunny.

Many parents fear that their children will not “like” being outside in the cold, or that they will get sick from being outside in the cold fresh air. For this reason, it is particularly important that young children enjoy outdoor activities in their early childhood education service.

Playing outside in autumn, winter, and early spring, each present their own unique opportunities for exploration and learning. Therefore, outdoor play should be embraced in all types of weather, as it is crucial for children’s ongoing development.

During autumn and winter, more bugs and viruses tend to circulate. This leads to few children being able to make it through the colder weather without getting ill. Winter frequently gets a bad name for making children poorly, but the key reason for contracting germs is staying indoors and around people who are unwell. With little ventilation, germs are easily circulated, making children more susceptible to viruses.

Playing outdoors in the fresh, chilly, open air can boost kids’ immune systems, developing their ability to fight off infections and build resistance to allergies.

When playing outdoors, kids can keep fit and continue developing their physical skills. Outdoor play reduces the risk of obesity by getting blood flowing to the organs, at the same time as keeping them fit and healthy.

Colder weather brings lots of different and fresh challenges for kids and offers new ways of learning outdoors.

Children are encouraged to assess risks such as slippery surfaces caused by the rain and frost; they can then adapt their play to ensure safety. It also helps children to acquire new problem-solving skills and promotes cognitive thinking.

Learning about the elements and nature in class is one thing, seeing and experiencing them is another. Playing in the cold encourages children to ask and to learn about the rain cycle and at what temperature rain turns into ice.

Why do the leaves change colour in autumn? Why, after playing outside for 10 minutes, do they feel much warmer than they initially did? Playing outside in different weather conditions delivers a new found appreciation of nature.

During the winter, we have a small window of opportunity to be exposed to sunlight and increase our vitamin D levels.

Irrespective of the weather, and as long as children are dressed appropriately in the colder months, outdoor play should continue to be outside (with a few exceptions).

Research shows that exposure to sunlight provides essential vitamin D, which regulates mental and emotional moods, increases energy, and sharpens memory. In as little as 15 minutes of playing outside, children can get their daily dosage of vitamin D.

When will we not send children outside:

- If a child is visibly unwell and parents are collecting (ratio's permitted)
- Adverse weather conditions which may cause harm such as branches falling, severe ice, flooding etc.
- Unable to access the garden for unforeseen circumstances
- Other events happening in the nursery

Reviewed: November 2022

Signature:.....

INFORMATION FOR THIS POLICY WAS SOURCED FROM: Every Child Matters —Firm Foundations, EYFS, Too safe for their own good by Jennie Lindon.