

Outside Play Policy

Children's participation in regular outdoor play is fundamental to a child's well being; helping to stimulate their physical, intellectual, emotional and social development.

The Lyme Nursery is committed to an ongoing investment in children's outdoor recreational activities; it values and promotes outside play as a vital part of the child's development and welfare within the balance of their structured day.

It is important that the following policy guidelines are maintained:

- The Nursery generally allocates a total of 1 hour outside playtime per day for each group within the balance of the general structured curriculum; (allocation of lengths of sessions may be varied according to circumstances, e.g. appropriate weather.) The hour is divided into 2 half-hour sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.
- The Nursery endeavours to provide a variety of outdoor experiences for the children. Staff can choose to opt to take their groups out individually to provide a combination of structured adult initiated play or child lead free play.
- The Nursery has a flexible approach to outdoor play and we often combine child groups to encourage socialisation amongst children who often enjoy a special time with their siblings and friends from other groups.
- Staff are required to plan these joint sessions carefully ensuring that sufficient staff remain in the house to deal with emergencies; answering the door; telephone etc. Senior management need to be kept informed if all the children go outside together. Staff also need to be mindful of noise levels for our neighbours.

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PREPARING TO TAKE CHILDREN OUT

Nursery Staff will require 5-10 minutes preparation time prior to taking children outside during their allotted rota period. This preparation will need to take account of the following health & safety planning:

- Regardless of what the rota indicates, have any other groups been out on the day concerned or is your group the first?
- If your group is the first outside, one nursery nurse must do a Risk Assessment for safety checks (kept in Hallway) regarding the following: Risk Assessment form must be completed, signed and dated.
 - ❑ Is the equipment dry to sit/ride on etc? (Take a couple of hand towels from the kitchen with you.)
 - ❑ Check the play area for any unusual dangerous items e.g. animal fowling; nettles; cans; litter etc.
 - ❑ Outdoor temperature; any need for warm clothes; sun cream etc.
- Drinks are always taken into the garden.
- Organise children regarding toileting arrangements; appropriate clothing; sun cream etc. 5-10 minutes prior to rota time.
- Headcount children prior to going out and take your room register.
- Secure the front driveway gate before releasing children from the house.
- Check that you have sufficient adult support before leaving the house in consideration of the age and numbers in your group.
- If you require extra support, request Senior Staff assistance or liase with Team Leaders.
- Once outside ensure regular headcounts.
- Children must walk at all times and remain together, gathering at each gate before entering the outdoor play area.

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DURING OUTSIDE PLAY SESSIONS

Outdoor play, as with indoor activities, requires planning, interaction and supervision. There may be occasions when children need informal playtime amongst themselves, however, this activity within the structure of a child's day needs to be observed and on occasions assessed by staff. Simple games and group activities will require regular staff involvement and participation. **Children should not be left to their own devices for entire outdoor sessions.**

In the case of injury or children requiring to use the toilet facilities during outside play sessions they must be accompanied back to the house where the individual needs of the child can be addressed. If the carer is to be absent from the outdoor group for any length of time then relief outdoor supervision must be organised.

RETURNING FROM THE OUTSIDE PLAY AREA

Outdoor toys, ride-ons etc. Are to be tidied away and put together. Whilst these items remain outside, the last group of the day to visit the play area should turn any items on their side that are required to be dry to use e.g. bikes, tables and chairs, slides etc.

The following routine needs to be adopted as children return to the house:

- Gates to the play area; top and bottom driveway are all secure and children must wait at each gate to gather together before proceeding.
- Children must walk at all times and remain together.
- Staff must headcount children between the play area and their return to the entrance hallway in the house.
- Upon return to group rooms children must have supervised hand washes.