

Outdoor Play

At Townsend Montessori Nurseries Limited we are committed to the importance of daily outdoor play and the physical development of all children regardless of their age and stage of development. We provide outdoor play in all weathers. Where possible and appropriate, we make outdoor activities accessible to children with learning difficulties and disabilities to ensure inclusive use of the outdoor area.

We recognise that children need regular access to outdoor play in order to keep fit and healthy, develop their large and fine motor skills, experience learning in a natural environment and access sunlight in order to absorb vitamin D more effectively. We also refer to the Chief Medical Office guidance on physical activity (www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-physical-activity-guidelines).

The outdoor areas, both within the nursery grounds and in the local community have a wealth of experiences and resources which help children to develop in a variety of ways, including independence, exploration and investigative skills, risk taking and self-esteem, all of which support children to develop skills now and for the future.

We ensure all areas are safe and secure through supervision and the use of robust risk assessments, safety checks and procedures. Where possible and appropriate, we plan and encourage play that helps children understand and manage risks. This type of play allows children to explore and find their own boundaries in a safe environment with supportive practitioners. Staff are informed of the importance of safety procedures and are trained appropriately to ensure these procedures are followed effectively.

We obtain parental permission before any child leaves the nursery during the day. This includes short outings into the local community. Please refer to the outings policy.

We plan all outdoor play opportunities and outings to complement the indoor activities and provide children with purposeful activities that support and follow individual children's interests. There is a balance of both adult-led and child-initiated opportunities to enable children to learn and practice new skills, knowledge and behaviours.

We use this policy alongside the following policies to ensure the safety and welfare of children throughout their time outside:

- Health and Safety
- Lost Child Policy
- Parents and Carers as Partners
- Supervision of Children
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Outings.

The following safety procedures will be carried out on daily basis to support children during their outdoor play:

- A **garden health and safety check** will take place before children enter the outdoor area – staff initial to confirm all area have been checked and record any issues they have found i.e. broken equipment
- Access to outdoor areas will be **carried out in small groups**. Staff will communicate with other members of their team the number of children they have in their group, ensuring each know how many children remain under their supervision.
- **Half hourly headcounts** will take place when in the outdoor area – these are documented on a headcount sheet
- **Staff are well deployed** around the outdoor area, ensuring children are supervised during activities
- **Head counts** will take place as children re-enter the building
- The room leader or senior member of staff will use the **daily register** to carry out a further check
- A **garden bag** is in place containing all documentation that may be required i.e. accident forms, monitoring forms
- Once children have re-entered the building a member of staff will carry out **closing checks** in the outdoor area, initialling to confirm this has been completed

This policy was adopted on	Date for review
23.12.19	December 2020