Outdoor Play Policy

At Muddy Puddles Childcare we recognise the importance of daily outdoor play and physical development and are committed to ensuring all children have daily access regardless of their age or stage of development. Where possible this includes the children having free access to the outdoors allowing them the freedom to choose whether to play indoors or out. We provide an inclusive outdoor play environment with areas for non-mobile children to freely explore. We make reasonable adjustments where required, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We go out to play with all children in all weathers (unless it is deemed unsafe).

We understand the vital role that learning outdoors has on children's learning and development as well as the importance of regular access to outdoor play in order to keep fit and healthy, develop children's 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 Officers guidance on physical activity.

The outdoor areas, both within the nursery grounds and around the farm, have a wealth of experiences and resources, which help children to learn and 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 take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children through risk assessments whilst balancing the benefits to learning through providing an element of 'risky play.' 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 ensure outdoor play is adequately supervised and we have robust safety checks in place, including regular head counts.

We plan all outdoor play opportunities and outings to complement the early years curriculum. This includes providing children with purposeful activities and quality resources that support and follow their individual interests and the seven areas of learning and development. We plan both adult-led and child-initiated opportunities to enable children to learn and practice new skills, knowledge and behaviours. Where possible and in line with the children's needs we will also often have snacks and meals outdoors.

Where activities take place away from the setting (e.g. on the farm) then a nursery mobile phone and first aid kit will be taken to ensure the safety of children at all times. A trained paediatric first aider will be present when children are away from the main setting.

9https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/physical-activity-guidelines

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

- Health and safety – general policy
- Managing extreme weather
- Sun care
- Caring for babies and toddlers
- Missing child from nursery
- Missing child from outings
- Parents as partners
- Supervision of children
- Safeguarding children and child protection

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
01/03/2026	Heather Black	01/03/2027