

# Blackhall Nursery

## Outdoor Play Policy

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### Aim

Play is a fundamental right for children and it is an essential part of every child's development

The aim of this policy is to ensure that outdoor play is a safe and stimulating experience which promotes enjoyment and confidence while developing and using a broad range of skills. In its implementation of this policy Blackhall Nursery will have due regard to its obligations set out in the Scottish Social Service Council Codes of Practice for employers of Social Service Workers and Social Service Workers.

### Objectives

Blackhall Nursery will provide a balanced programme of outdoor activities to support the needs and interests of all children and which will develop the following:

- Physical and emotional wellbeing
- Creativity
- Social skills such as empathy and negotiation
- Self Esteem and confidence
- Problem solving
- personal safety
- Risk assessing
- Environmental awareness

### Safety in the Outdoor Areas

- Adults will ensure close supervision at all times.
- The member of staff supervising outdoors should carry a walkie talkie at all times to allow them to call for assistance if required.
- All staff who are supervising the outdoor area should use their professional judgement to decide whether additional adult support or other minor adjustments are necessary to make outdoor play safe. Consider factors such as staff experience, increased hazards (e.g. weather conditions, property maintenance), recent incidents and knowledge of individual children and group dynamics.
- Issues arising that may require additional measures to be put in place (e.g. additional supervision) should be highlighted immediately to the Nursery Manager, or in her absence, the deputy, by the staff supervising the outdoor area.
- A member of staff must ensure the Nursery gate is locked before the children are allowed out into the garden area.
- Staff should support children to dress appropriately for outdoor activities.
- Outdoor equipment and grounds must be checked and maintained by all staff prior to each daily session of play in the garden. An outdoor equipment log sheet must be

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completed each time the equipment and grounds are checked. It will be the responsibility of the staff Health and Safety rep to ensure that any required actions logged on this sheet are carried out. Children may also be involved in checking the outdoor equipment along with a member of staff to raise their awareness of safety and risk assessment.

- Faulty equipment will be removed from use immediately and recorded in the appropriate log Book.

### **A Child's Right to Outdoor Play**

We support each child's right to play and in line with Care Inspectorate guidance we will provide, as a minimum, the opportunity to experience:

- Routine access to a stimulating outdoor play area including daily opportunities to spend time outdoors;
- Freedom of choice to move between the indoor and outdoor environments;
- The opportunity to explore the natural environment;
- Access to a range of high-quality outdoor play and learning opportunities throughout the year; and
- Resources to support learning and development.

Through access to a range of outdoor activities we expect that children will:

- Participate in a wide range of activities that will support a healthy lifestyle;
- Develop the skills to access and manage risk;
- Experience personal achievement and build confidence;
- Explore and make choices; and
- Develop physical skills through movement and energetic play.

### **Risk in Play**

"The Care Inspectorate supports care service providers taking a positive approach to risk in order to achieve the best outcomes for children. This means moving away from a traditional deficit model that takes a risk-averse approach, which can unnecessarily restrict children's experiences attending registered services, to a more holistic risk-benefit model. For example, we encourage services to use risk assessment to support children to enjoy potentially hazardous activities such as woodwork using real tools, exploring nature and playing in the mud and rain. We do not expect written risk assessments to be carried out for daily play activities." (Statement from the Care Inspectorate dated 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015.)

Throughout the year the children will be taken into Ravelston Woods by Nursery staff to enjoy exploring nature, observing the changes that occur across the seasons, cooking marshmallows over a fire pit and for some topic-based hunts. Nursery staff will carry out risk assessments prior to such visits and the children will also be involved in discussions about risks and keeping safe. It is recognised that such risk assessments should appreciate the benefits of risk, be proportionate and should support children to enjoy potentially hazardous activities safely (e.g. a proportionate risk assessment for climbing trees would be that children climb to a height equivalent to their own height. It is important that children are allowed to take risks when playing as otherwise they may grow up to be over-cautious or be unable to judge potentially dangerous situations.

More information about the benefits of Risky Play is available in 'My World Outdoors' (Care Inspectorate, 2016) and 'Risky Play' (Play Scotland).

Staff will use the Risk-benefit assessment form (see Appendix A) as necessary to assess the benefits of new activities.

Adopted on: 29.04.24

Revised Nov 2004/Oct 07/Mar 09/Dec 09/Apr 13/Oct 16, Jan 17, Feb 17, Mar 21, May 24  
FG 24.10.07/23.03.09/3.12.09 /10.04.13/14.11.16/30.01.17/09.02.201/GS Mar 21/ GS 05/24

## **Blackhall Nursery – Risk-Benefit Assessment**

The purpose of this form is to control the risk on the activity noted below whilst also recognising the benefit to children’s development, health and wellbeing in taking part in said activity. This procedure covers the individual duties and responsibilities of those controlling the activity and the procedures for controlling the identified risk. The Excursion Leader must be nominated by the Manager/Person-in-Charge before the outing.

**Risk Assessed by:**

**Date:**

**Activity:**

**BENEFITS** to children’s development, health and wellbeing include:

**HAZARDS** identified in this activity include:

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

Health & Safety Officer should:

Nursery staff / Volunteers should:

Board Directors should:

Children should:

Parents should:

**Blackhall Nursery – Risk-Benefit Assessment**

**FEEDBACK SECTION**

The risk benefit assessment form for each outing should be reviewed by the excursion leader immediately after the outing. If any concerns have arisen during the outing, the excursion leader must convey that information to the Health and Safety Officer whose responsibility it will be to ensure that the risk benefit assessment is adjusted for future outings and that the appropriate safety measures are incorporated (Outings and Excursions Policy)

Name of excursion leader: .....

Concerns arising:

.....  
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.....  
.....

Concerns discussed with H&S Officer: Y / N

Date:

Actions arising for H&S Officer:

Done

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Date completed: