



# Nottingham Nursery School & Training Centre

## Outdoor Learning & Offsite Visits Policy

May 2017

### Outdoor Learning

Our School is committed to providing children with access to a wide range of outdoor learning opportunities providing enjoyment, learning and development.

Levels of staff supervision will be sufficient to ensure that the safety of children is assured, and set according to the nature of the activity, along with the ages and number of children involved. All children will have access to all activities regardless of their special educational need or language needs. Children will be taught to respect and care for the environment, handle tools safely, and enjoy the outdoors whatever the weather.

Outdoor learning will provide opportunities for physical, social, emotional, spiritual and cognitive development. We have a large play area with a substantial canopied area. Under the canopy we provide all areas of learning but on a larger, louder and messier scale than indoors. The outdoor play space has mature trees; chickens and fish; a large raised bed we call the allotment where children grow vegetables which the kitchen cooks for them; a superb natural material area with water, sand, stones and pebbles and space for mini-beast hunting. There is a road area for bikes and scooters and many opportunities for climbing, balancing, swinging and sliding.

Adjacent to our site we have approximately an acre of field in which we have created our Forest Garden. This is an area with apple and pear trees, deciduous native trees, soft fruit bushes, a fire pit, a storytelling amphitheatre and chair, a trench with several different types of bridge, balancing beams, living willow structures, a bog garden and a shallow pond.

We will develop outdoor learning by:

- Providing outdoor clothing for all weathers
- Providing meaningful activities in all our outdoor areas
- Supporting children in making connections between inside and outside environments
- Encouraging children to contribute to the maintenance (planting, weeding, watering)

- Encouraging children to challenge themselves and take risks
- Encouraging children to record their discoveries
- Supporting children in negotiating and co-operating to solve problems
- Supporting children in using all their senses to enjoy the environment
- Modelling and respecting the need for tranquillity, solitude and spirituality
- Modelling caring for the living things in our environment
- Planting, cultivating, harvesting and eating fresh produce
- Providing resources for investigation
- Modelling safe use of tools and resources
- Providing resources for the development of gross motor skills
- Celebrating children's discoveries
- Observing children's activities and sharing learning with parents
- Engaging experts to support staff in specific areas eg Forest Schools, Eco-schools
- Ensuring relevant Risk assessments are completed
- Ensuring all staff are aware of Health and Safety, accident reporting systems
- Ensuring parents are informed of our philosophy and practice

There will be a named member of staff with responsibility for planning and reviewing the learning outdoors and the provision of activities.

## Offsite Visits

Our school believes that visits and outings play an important and enriching role in the programme of activities that we provide for children. However, during such events, the safety of children remains paramount.

Prior to a visit or outing the lead member of staff will carry out an exploratory visit of the proposed destination so as to pre-empt any potential difficulties.

The Head will ensure that a thorough risk assessment has been carried out prior to the proposed visit of an outing. This should include consideration of the journey and any transportation involved. If a prior visit is not possible, the Head will write to the venue requesting all relevant information and a risk assessment statement where available.

The school will make every effort to involve children in the planning of a visit or outing. Staff will explain to children the aims and objectives of the event, along with what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour and contribution.

Children will be talked through any potential safety hazards and told to remain with staff at all times. Staff will explain to children what to do in an emergency, including designating a suitable meeting point.

The school will send a letter to parents/carers giving them detailed information about the proposed event, which will include a full programme of activities, any costs involved, an outline of any journey involved and the mode of transport being used as well as approximate arrival and departure times.

Parental consent is needed for all off-site visits and outings. The Head will take a photocopy of the signed consent forms on the trip while the original will be stored in the school's records.

Parents/carers have the absolute right to withhold consent for a proposed visit or outing. Any child who does not have a signed consent form will not be allowed to participate.

## **During Visits and Outings**

- Children will remain under close supervision at all times
- The lead member of staff will ensure that a full First Aid kit is on hand, and an appropriate number of First aiders are accompanying the children
- Two designated members of staff will keep mobile phones with them at all times and their numbers will be circulated to all parents/carers in advance of the visits and outings. These numbers will also be left at the school in case of an emergency
- Regular head counts will be taken by staff
- A list of all members of staff and children participating in the visit or outing, along with relevant mobile phone numbers, will be left with the member of staff left at the school's premises (if staff numbers allow for such a provision).

## **Forest Garden**

Forest Garden is a specially designed and constructed space for under 5s through a playing field attached to the school's outdoor playing space. It has been designed to allow children regular access to Forest School activity led by a member of staff who is level 3 trained.

Parents are informed in advance of a visit and have the opportunity sometimes to accompany their child.

## Staffing

The head and deputy have attended the LA Offsite Visits Co-ordinator training and all staff who lead on offsite visits will be of a senior level.

On visits or outings, the staff to child ratio will be 1:8, unless children are aged 2 in which case it will be 1:4; subject to the nature of the activity and the risk assessment. Only paid members of staff will count as adults for ratio purposes.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.