

## Free Flow Environment Policy

EYFS: 1.1-1.6, 1.11 -1.15, 3.55, 3.58, 3.59,3.65

At **Little Fingers Pre-school** we recognise the importance of outdoor play and the physical development and are committed to ensure all children have access regardless of their age and stage of development. Where possible this includes the children having free access to the outdoors allowing them the freedom to play indoors or out. We provide an inclusive outdoor play environment and 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.

The outdoor areas, both within the pre-school grounds and in the local community 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 obtain parental permission before any child leaves the pre-school during the day. This includes short outings into the local community. There is more information in the outings policy.

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. in the local wood) then a pre-school mobile phone and first aid kit will be taken to ensure the safety of children at all times. All our full-time staff are trained paediatric first aiders.

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

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

<b>This policy was adopted on</b>	<b>Signed on behalf of the pre-school</b>	<b>Date for review</b>
May 2022		May 2023