**Busy Bodies Child Care Centre Ltd**

**Outdoor Play Upstairs Policy and Procedure**

The importance of outdoor play is well recognised. It is seen as an integral part of early years provision.

The outdoor environment is a special place for all children and offer the type of learning most appropriate for young children, space to be active and learn by moving and doing, using a combination of experience and play opportunities drawn from building on a child’s own personal world.

Outdoor play offers the following:

* A chance to develop large and fine motor skills and cardiovascular endurance which helps keep children healthy.
* It provides the chance to explore and discover the natural world.
* It offers the children the opportunity to explore space around them, to learn to share and negotiate space.
* Outdoor play stimulates the senses, offering different sights, sounds, smells and touch/ feel opportunities.

Outdoor play is an active form of learning that unities the mind, body and spirit. Children learn well when the whole self is stimulated.

Outdoor play reduces tension and often comes with trying to achieve or needing to learn, outside children are freer and more relaxed.

Children who learn to enjoy outdoor play are more likely to become adults who enjoy physical exercise and outdoor pursuits.

Outdoor play offers the chance to learn and cooperate with others building social skills.

Outside is a different learning environment which promotes creativity through new challenges and tasks.

Outside children will learn to be aware of risks and hazards, learning safety as they play.

**Procedure**

A rota has been created so each member of staff know when it is their turn to go outside. Typically two members of staff go outside with a group of children and two members of staff stay inside with a group of children. This ensures ratios are maintained and the children are safely supervised at all times.

During free play time two members of staff will be allocated to take the group of children outside. They will check the registers and diary to see if we are expecting any visitors or parents / carers during the time outside. One member of staff will first go outside and check the outdoor environment, locking the door behind them. They will check for any unauthorised visitors being in the outdoor space. If an unauthorised person is in the outdoor environment they will ask them why they are there and if they have no good reason for being there they will be asked to leave. The staff member will lock the outdoor gate then ensuring the outside space is then secure from unauthorised people entering. They will then thoroughly check the space to ensure it is safe for the children to play in. They will bare in mind the ages and stages of development of the children to ensure that every area of the space is safe to explore. They will then enter the building again and help the other member of staff get the children ready to go outside. The two members of staff will mark on the blackboard which children they are taking outside and tell the two members of staff who are staying inside which children they are taking with them. Once ready the two members of staff and group of children will exit the building, locking the door behind them and walk towards the outside space. They will be mindful of the steps and the fact that sometimes the bridge does get slippery. Once in the outdoor space they will close the low gate behind them as double security that the children can not get out of the space. They will then proceed to observe and play with the children. When it is time to come back inside they will count the children to ensure all the children are present and then they will walk back inside. Once safely inside, one member of staff will go back outside and unlock the gate, The safety of the children is paramount at all times and high levels of supervisions is expected.

Whilst playing outside if a member of staff notices a member of the public looking over from the balcony or taking photographs then this person will be immediately challenged. The member of staff will call the LMC who will then investigate and ensure that any photographs that have been taken are deleted.

Some of the children are crawling / bottom shuffling and therefore extra care has to be taken in regards to the flooring. If the floor is very wet or very hot then these children will either put a waterproof suit on or stay inside until the floor is safe to be on.

If a parent/ carer or visitor comes whilst the children are playing outside then the staff should be expecting them and already prepared for this. When they arrive one member of the outside team will let the parent / carer or visitor in through the locked gate and escort them to the front door. They will then pass them on to a member of the inside team and then return to their duty outside. They will close the gate behind them at all times to ensure that the children are all safely behind the gate and therefore away from the exit.

This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually,

Updated on ………………………………………….. By …………………………………………………………..

This policy has been read, understood and signed by all the staff.

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