



# ***Early Years – Outdoor Learning Policy***

## **Policy Information**

<b>Date of last review:</b>	January 2026	<b>Review period:</b>	2 years
<b>Date ratified by Local Governors:</b>	January 2026	<b>Policy owner:</b>	EY Lead

## **Reviews/revisions**

<b>Review date</b>	<b>Changes made</b>	<b>By whom</b>
January 2028		

## **Rationale**

The Early Years Framework (2025) states

“Providers must provide access to an outdoor play area. If that is not possible, they must ensure that outdoor activities are planned and taken on a daily basis (unless circumstances make this inappropriate, for example unsafe weather conditions). Providers must follow their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 (for example, the provisions on reasonable adjustments)”

A well-planned learning environment, indoors and outside, is an important part of pedagogy (Development Matters, 2021)

- Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of children's development.
- Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors.
- It gives children first-hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world.
- Outdoor environments offer children freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant

## **Aims**

At Princefield Early Years our aim is to enable children to experience the outdoor environment on a daily basis. We will ensure outdoor provision is available for all children, within the setting including those pupils with special needs.

The outdoor environment will be made available daily (unless weather makes this unsafe), providing a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led experiences.

We will use the wider school environment to extend children's learning experiences, including the playground, forest area and school field.

## **Manager responsibilities**

- SLT will ensure that at least one staff member is Pediatric First Aid trained and that there is always a PFA trained member of staff on-site. A list of PFA trained staff is displayed in Nursery and Reception indoor classrooms.
- Ensure all staff are aware of any associated conditions for all pupils that may be affected by outdoor learning – e.g. allergies/asthma. All staff will be aware of the measures to reduce risk of allergic reaction.
- Ensure there will be a first aid box in Nursery and Reception which will be accessible at all times.
- Ensure gates will be free from obstruction in case of fire or emergency
- Boundaries will be maintained and secure
- Ensure all staff will be aware of planning for the outdoor area and regularly evaluated to maximise the impact of outdoor learning
- Ensure an audit of the Outdoor Area yearly and new equipment requested.

## **Staff responsibilities**

- Staff will ensure they are watchful of all children outdoors, even if they are engrossed in an activity with a smaller group of children
- Ensure access gates remain closed and locked where able
- Maintain the correct staff to child ratios
- Ensure children are safe at all times and ensure consistent rules for behaviour are adhered to
- Model appropriate behaviour outside
- Communicate with other staff if you need to suddenly leave the area you are in e.g. assisting with individual needs (first aid, toilet, clothing etc.).

- Ensure children are wearing shoes/wellies at all times
- Ensure current paediatric first aid remains in date and updated every three years and this is displayed in Nursery and Reception classrooms.
- The key person must ensure that every child's care and learning is tailored to meet their individual needs/next steps
- Support planning for the outdoor area
- The role of the adult outside is the same as the role of the adult inside; to observe and scaffold learning. There may be times when an adult is working on adult-led tasks with groups or pupils 1:1
- Children should be encouraged to make their own choices and lead their own learning with appropriate support from an understanding adult
- Through observation, staff should have a deep understanding of how individual children learn best, their interests and personal motivations and are therefore able to offer appropriate individualised support to them
- All staff are responsible for setting up and clearing away equipment
- Staff should be enthusiastic about the outdoors and understand the importance of outdoor learning. Staff need to display qualities that we would like young children to develop such as enquiry, motivation, willingness to try and a positive attitude.
- Staff need to check the outdoor area, using the appropriate daily risk assessments and ensure that Outdoor areas used are safe and prepared for use before children are present in them

### **Health and Safety**

At Princefield we ensure that children have access to outdoor learning every day, all year round. A daily health and safety check of all outdoor learning areas and equipment is carried out before taking the children out and any hazards are removed. We use risk assessments which are displayed in Nursery and Reception as checklists which must be carried out and signed by staff before children are permitted into our outdoor areas.

We ensure that children wear coats, hats, gloves etc. in the winter and sun hats and sun cream during the summer period (Parents responsibility to send to school).

All staff will regularly discuss with our children about safety, taking risks and achieving goals and challenges in the outdoor environment.

### **Using the Wider School Environment**

At Princefield, our Early Years will also frequently use the wider school grounds including playground, forest area and school field. We will follow the school risk assessments for these area and ensure that the children are using these areas safely through checking areas before use, maintaining staff/child ratios and following all the safety measures as outlined for our Outdoor Areas above.

### **Outings**

Children must be kept safe while on outings.

The following must be considered:

- A risk assessment must be provided, hazards identified, steps taken to remove and minimise the risks and hazards.
- Ratios must be considered and adhered to
- Children with SEND or additional needs will be accompanied by an adult 1:1 and in some cases a parent/carer will be asked to attend the visit to support the child
- Transport and insurance
- What the intended learning or outcomes of the trip will be
- Parents will be informed of all outings and risk assessments will be available for parents on request

### **Equality of opportunity**

At Princefield we ensure that equality of opportunity outside is covered by the following:

- Ensure that all children have the ability or support to play and explore in the outdoor area.
- Monitor how children use the outdoor area.
- Provide opportunities suitable for all genders to ensure enjoyment and enthusiasm for all children.
- We will adapt the facilities and learning opportunities whenever possible, to enable all children to use them.

### **Links with other Policies**

- Princefield Medicines and First Aid Policy
- Allergy Policy
- Early Years Sun Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Early Years Behaviour Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Outings/Trips Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier if necessary.

