



John Wilkinson Primary School and Nursery Out of School Hours Provision

Outdoor Learning Policy (Welly Wanderers)

Updated Spring Term 2026

AIM

It is our aim to give children, parents/carers and practitioners a shared understanding of the ethos of an outdoor learning experience. This powerful approach enables younger children to be independent, self-motivated, courageous, and considerate and sets them up for lifelong learning. It particularly supports the development of self-esteem and self-confidence.

WHAT WE PROVIDE AT WELLY WANDERERS

We provide a safe, challenging learning environment in the grounds of the John Wilkinson School and Nursery site. Nursery will provide waterproofs for the Pre-school children only to wear. If children prefer to wear their own set of waterproofs, please let the Leader know – this will not be a problem. The sessions are led by Practitioners trained in the Forest School approach. The staff are proactive in ensuring there is a high ratio of adults during sessions regardless of the numbers of children.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We actively encourage parents to find out about outdoor learning sessions by inviting them to an information evening. They will accompany the staff and children to the wooded area. Visitors should take their cue from the staff in all respects.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Leader will assess the weather conditions and the condition of the wood before the session will start. Adults model how we treat and take care of the environment and if the session needs to be cancelled, we will use the school grounds and playground to ensure children still experience an outdoor session. If the weather is a concern in terms of lightening, then the session will be cancelled, and children will remain in the setting.

CANCELLATION PROCEDURE

There may be times when sessions must be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. These may be:

- Staff illness, which prevents staff /child ratios being met.
- Severe weather conditions (particularly high winds).
- Any situation that poses a health and safety risk.

In these cases, a similar session will run within Nursery grounds promoting the ethos of outdoor learning.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Part of the Welly Wanderers ethos is not to remove all hazards or risks. The adults and children need to learn how to manage dangers and risk taking. Part of the risk assessments carried out is to ensure the children and adults are able to carry out activities with realistic control measures in place. The leader will complete a general risk assessment of the site according to the season. There will be another daily risk assessment completed for each of the sessions.

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A risk assessment will also be carried out for individual activities, for example – lighting a fire. The leader can carry a mobile phone during an outdoor learning session in case of an emergency. The only camera permitted is the settings camera.

CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS

Please see our Safeguarding Policy. While in the wood a member of staff will always make sure the adult is in clear view. Sometimes the children need to return to the setting to use the toilet, only the staff members with the correct DBS checks will bring the children back to the setting. Consideration will be given to ratios when 2-year-olds attend. In some cases, it may be the whole group returns for someone to go to the toilet, but the leader will make a decision at the time based on their experience and the circumstances.

CONSIDERATION FOR EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

It is our intention to ensure equality and inclusion take place throughout our setting. However, due to the natural environment there may be challenges present. Due to the individuality of children and families, it will be our policy to work with families. We can do this through communication, home visits and the key person approach. Families will be encouraged to visit our wooded site where difficulties can be identified and possible solutions discussed. There may be a need to discuss issues with the Head Teacher, so possible funding for equipment, resources or staffing may be sourced.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

At the end of each session, the leader will evaluate the session. This will include a reflective account on the session, what the interests of the children were and if there were any changes needed. From this information the leader will be able to plan the following week's activities from the children's interests ensuring the ethos of leaders training, taking into consideration any feedback from other practitioners and parents/carers. Leaders will also use planning based on medium term planning using the school's subscription to Cornerstones.

For instances of a lost child / injured child whilst at Welly Wanderers, please see the following policies: -

- PROCEDURE FOR INJURIES TO CHILDREN, STAFF, PARENTS OR VOLUNTEERS
- LOST CHILD POLICY