

Outdoor intervention and learning

Next Review September 2027

1. Introduction

Our outdoor provision is a vital part of children's development. This policy outlines how interventions are delivered in the outdoor environment to support learning, wellbeing, and growth. The outdoors offers unique opportunities for exploration, resilience, and creativity that enhance the curriculum and children's everyday experiences.

2. Aims

Through outdoor interventions, we aim to:

- Support children's individual needs through personalised, meaningful activities.
- Build confidence, independence, and problem-solving skills.
- Encourage teamwork, communication, and positive relationships.
- Promote physical development, health, and emotional wellbeing.
- Foster a respect for nature and sustainable practices.

3. Principles of Intervention Outdoors

- Child-Led: Children's interests, strengths, and needs guide the intervention.
- Practical and Hands-On: Real experiences support engagement and progress.
- Risk and Challenge: Managed challenges help children grow in resilience and decision-making.
- Inclusive Practice: Every child has access, with adaptations where needed.
- Holistic Approach: Interventions support social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

4. Planning Interventions

- Interventions are flexible and responsive to children's needs.
- Sessions may be planned in advance or arise spontaneously from children's interests depending on their goals.
- Activities link to wider learning goals but always make the most of outdoor opportunities (e.g., seasons, weather, nature).
- Interventions are short, focused, and purposeful, with clear objectives for each child.

5. Intervention Approaches

Adults act as guides and facilitators rather than directors.

Strategies include:

- Modelling skills and behaviours.
- Asking open ended questions.
- Supporting children to reflect on what they did and learned.
- Providing encouragement and scaffolding while allowing independence.
- Children are encouraged to take ownership, explore, and lead their own learning journey.

6. Outdoor Learning Environment

- The outdoor space is set up to be safe, inviting, and stimulating.
- Resources are natural, flexible, and open-ended (sticks, stones, water, mud, etc.).
- Zones for different activities (exploration, quiet reflection, physical challenge) are used where possible.
- The environment adapts with the seasons and children's needs.
- Staff actively identify and promote incidental learning opportunities, including literacy and numeracy, as part of everyday outdoor experiences. These opportunities arise naturally through exploration, conversation, problem solving, and interaction with the environment.
- Adults make the most of spontaneous moments to support learning in meaningful, context-rich ways.
Examples include: Animal Health checks, accessing the community eg local shop, preparing of animal feeds.

7. Inclusion and Accessibility

All children are included in outdoor interventions, regardless of background, ability, or needs.

Adults adapt activities so every child can take part meaningfully.

Interventions are tailored to support emotional regulation, sensory needs, or social development where appropriate.

Outdoor interventions and learning experiences must always reflect children's age, developmental stage, and individual readiness. Staff are expected to understand typical developmental behaviours across age groups and adapt the level of challenge, support, and expectations accordingly. Children's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development influences how they explore, assess risk, communicate, and engage with learning outdoors. Teaching approaches, resources, and adult interactions must therefore be tailored so that activities are developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and supportive of each child's growth.

Outdoor learning opportunities are designed to honour each child's individual progress, ensuring that activities remain flexible, safe, and responsive. Staff are responsible for adjusting support, risk, and autonomy in line with each learner's maturity, confidence, and capabilities to promote holistic development and positive learning outcomes.

8. Safety and Risk

Regular risk assessments are carried out for the outdoor area and activities. Children are encouraged to assess and manage risks with adult guidance. Staff ensure supervision, safeguarding, and first aid procedures are always followed.

9. Monitoring Progress

Interventions are monitored through observation, reflection, and feedback. Staff record progress against set goals (social, emotional, physical.) Children are involved in reflecting on their own achievements.

10. Communication with parent/carers and support network

Feedback is gathered throughout the term to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people accessing the farm. This is done informally through verbal communication before and after sessions where appropriate, and via email between sessions. Feedback is also gathered formally each half term via feedback gathering form. Staff gather young people's views through monitoring engagement and informally discussing during activities. Feedback is used to monitor progress and understand areas of development and to promote positive outcomes in line with their EHCP.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Staff

- must plan and deliver high quality interventions outdoors.
- Support children to engage actively, take responsibility, and support peers where appropriate.
- Keep families informed of interventions and encouraged to support learning beyond the farm.
- Access Continued professional development (CPD) to ensure their knowledge and skills meet the needs of all individuals accessing the service.
- Access supervision to ensure they are fully supported to develop their understanding of therapeutic approaches to empower their young people to recognize their potential and develop transferable skills.

Leaders

- Complete ad hoc review as and when required based on engagement in weekly session and feedback from home/young person/school.
- Lead a whole team meeting every where all Farm Assistants are discussed prior to written reviews.
- Allow opportunities to discuss child engagement and progress each week.
- Provide formal and informal supervision is accessible to all staff.
- Encourage good communication between home and other services to remain informed of all young peoples lives and circumstances.

13. Review

This policy is reviewed regularly through staff reflection and feedback, ensuring it remains practical and responsive to children's needs. But at a minimum annually.