Outdoor Policy

1. Introduction

At Home from Home Nursery, we believe that outdoor play is central to children's learning and it should be considered as an integral part of early years provision. Outdoor play is an entitlement for all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and it should be made available to children for most of the day and throughout the year. We aim to embed our Forest school and Beach school learning into our curriculum.

2. Contents

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3. Planning

The provision and planning for outdoor play, just as indoor, should reflect children's interests and respond to children's needs appropriately. To this end, we aim to develop a stimulating and motivating learning environment outdoors which should be the result of close observation and assessment. This information should feed the planning for the outdoor learning environment ensuring that there is opportunity for both child-initiated and adult-led activities as well as experiences that reflect the seven areas of learning specified in the EYFS. The outdoor provision needs to have clear learning intentions for children and the planning should be flexible to meet individual children's needs as they arise during the session. Each employee should provide at least one suggestion for the weekly planning of the outdoor learning environment per week.

4. Inclusion

Home from Home believes that all the children should have equal access to outdoor provision irrelevant of age or abilities. Adults should always encourage children to take turns and share by modelling desired behaviour and giving positive praise. All the activities and resources should enable differentiation and allow all the children to access learning according to their stage of development and abilities.

5. Deployment of employees

When taking the children outside an employee must go out first and the children follow.
The employees will aim to follow the ratios set in our policy as follows: 1:8 aged three or over, 1:5 aged two to three and 1:3 for children aged under the age of two. During free-flow time children will be able to choose between indoors or outdoors and the deployment of the employees will reflect the number of children choosing to access the outdoors. Outdoors the employees should always distribute themselves throughout the different sections of the environment. We aim to keep available to children's free access as many sections as possible. **Adults should be actively involved with children in their games and activities where appropriate and should not be solely in a supervisory role.** The team should scaffold children's intellectual, emotional, social and physical development by engaging in Sustained Shared Thinking and following the children's lead whenever possible. The adults need to have clear goals for children's learning, at the same time they need to be responsive to children's enthusiasm and interests.

6. Employee dress code in the garden

All the employees should always leave coats and shoes ready to go to the garden when they arrive in the morning in order to avoid children's waiting.

Employees are expected to go out in all weathers, as are the children. If employees do not have appropriate clothing for the weather conditions that day, they must organise for appropriate clothing to be delivered to them or borrow something from another employee.

7. Safety

- Before children go outside an employee must check the outdoor environment following our daily checklist for the garden. The same employee must set out the resources following planning guidance and remove any unsafe or damaged equipment.

- Employees on duty outdoors must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care, be vigilant at all times and never leave the play area for any reason unless another employee has taken over responsibility.

- It is most important for employees to move around the area constantly so that all areas are adequately supervised. Each person should position him/herself in separate areas so that no area is unsupervised. The employee supervising AstroTurf area or grass should always supervise the door in to the building to ensure children are not going inside without adequate adult supervision, children are not accessing the garden when ratios do not allow this, the door is not left open when it should be closed and children do not have an accident when opening and closing the doors.

- Preschool children MUST wear green bibs and Toddlers MUST wear pink bibs in the garden to ensure team members can efficiently monitor the headcount of children at all times.

- Children will be allowed in a section only when an employee is already in it. Gates of those areas that are not in used should remain closed. When leaving a section, the adult should always ensure that gates are closed behind them.

- At the end of the session the areas should be scanned carefully in case children should be left outside unsupervised, this includes looking behind, under and over objects.

- All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully to allow for safe and easy removal next day.

- In the case of emergency or severe accident the injured child will be attended to by one employee. Should ratios be over the legal limit at this point, the employees must gather all children and sit them down on the ground in front of them for a story, thus minimising risk of further accident. Details of the accident must be written up straight afterwards **(***Refer to Health & Safety Policy: Accidents***)**

- Children's clothing should be monitored carefully e.g., unfastened shoelaces and buckles, scarves and ties on anoraks which are too long can easily cause accidents, particularly on wheeled toys and climbing equipment. If children wearing sunglasses adult should monitor closely: encourage children to take glasses off when running or taking part in physical activities.

- If it is necessary for an adult to put toys away whilst children are still in the play areas, there must always be at least one other employee supervising the remaining children in the area.

- **The garden management plan should be followed at all time.**

8. Including children in risk-assessment:

- Encourage children always to look before they move on the equipment, or when jumping off apparatus; also encourage children to leave space between themselves and the child in front when moving planks, swinging or climbing up/down apparatus.

- When children are climbing on climbing frames/trees, employees must be continually aware of any risks (e.g., objects left underneath).

- Whenever children carry equipment (clearing away or carrying plank, etc.) they should be taught how to do it and adults should be aware of the risks involved and minimise them to ensure safety.

- **Toileting- whoever is monitoring the door in and out of the building MUST ensure that when a child goes in to the toilet an adult inside is able to go with them. If an adult inside is unable to supervise them in the toilet the employee outside must organise for themselves to be covered in that area and then attend to the child in the toilet.**

9. Parental involvement:

Parents should always provide appropriate clothing for all the weathers e.g., hats and sun cream when sunny and raincoats and wellington boots in rainy days. Parents will be advised to provide a spare set of clothes in case children get wet playing with water.

Parents, just as indoors, are welcome to take part in our sessions and/or take part in activities; however, parents are not to be counted in ratios and they should never be left unsupervised.

10. Review

This document will be reviewed annually or in line with any statutory changes or changes in procedure or process.

11. Version Control

Version	Date	Status	Comments	By
1	October 2015	Issued		Nicola Law
2	October 2018	Reviewed		Polly Manners
3	December 2019	Reviewed		Emma Corbin-Mckenzie
4	January 2022	Reviewed		Cassie Jones
5	December 2023	Reviewed		Sophie Eade
6	June 2025	Reviewed		Sophie Eade

7	August 2026	Reviewed		Sophie Eade