

Outdoor play.

Statement of intent

We at Bents Green Pre School believe that this area of play is of fundamental importance to the holistic development of our children. We believe the children benefit from having access to this area, and it is our policy that children should have the opportunity to access the outdoor area daily. In extreme weather conditions a decision will be made on a daily basis by the pre-school leader as to whether it is feasible to go outdoors. However we endeavour to go outdoors in all weathers.

Free flow play

In order to allow children the choice of learning environment, we provide free flow play for a significant part of the morning. Two staff members are assigned outdoors, and a third member of staff accompanies the child/children between indoor/outdoor areas.

Safety of area/children.

Fencing has been erected to a height of 6ft and is regularly checked for stability and security. A risk assessment is carried out each term to ensure the fencing panels are secure, the position of the fence means it can be vulnerable to wind, therefore regular maintenance is carried out.

During outdoor play the gate which allows access to the outdoor area is secured with a bolt at adult height, ensuring that the children are safe at all times, therefore allowing the children freedom to move around the outdoor area.

When not in use the soil and sand pits are covered, this stops animals fouling these areas.

The two sheds are locked when not in use; the children have access to the sheds during outdoor play and can choose what equipment they wish to play with. Maintenance checks on the sheds are carried out on a regular basis any repairs are noted and acted upon. We have two large sheds behind a large fence that is used only for storage. The children do not have access to these sheds.

All outdoor equipment is checked regularly for hazards or broken parts. On a daily basis the slide is wiped down before outdoor play and any pools of water removed. This is stated in our outdoor check list. The person who sets up

the outdoor area is responsible for this task. This includes checking for litter and animal faeces

Our welcome pack requests that children attending pre-school should come suitably dressed to go outdoors in all weather conditions, however the pre-school has a supply of wellingtons, ponchos, and umbrellas for the children's use. We have some spare coats and waterproof trousers available, to ensure every child can access the area if they wish.

In the event of extreme weather conditions a decision will be taken on the day regarding outdoor play.

Ground rules on safety.

Children can climb on the first section of the wall but **must not climb onto the railing level**. Children are regularly reminded of this by staff and other children.

Children can use wheeled vehicles (bikes, wheelbarrows, and push along toys) in the first section of the outdoor area. This allows children who do not wish to play on the bikes etc to have space to play and become involved and engaged in other activities.

Safe use of tools for digging (rakes and spades) should be used at ground level and not lifted in the air. Children are encouraged to return tools to the shed and not leave equipment on the ground.

Scissors should be used under staff supervision.

Learning opportunities and rational.

Outdoor play supports and enhances the learning and development of each child. It embraces all areas of the Early Years Development Stage framework. Some areas are achieved by making the children aware of safety whilst outdoors, reinforcing the potential danger to the children. Being able to access outdoor play experiences enhances the children's physical development; building on children's understanding of the environment allows children to take risks within a safe environment. Children show great pride in things that they have achieved; this could be bike riding for the first time or catching a ball.

The children make free choices regarding the equipment that is available for outside play, alongside planned activities that follow observations of children, so that children's interests are enhanced and extended to outdoor play.

The framework has four guiding principles;

A Unique Child

Positive Relationships.

Enabling Environments.

Learning and Development.

We at Bents Green Pre School believe that our outdoor area supports and enhances the underlying principles that underpin effective practice. We have a clear vision as to how outdoor play supports the four themes.

A unique child

Children can make individual choices, join in activities, play with other children, know their limits and extend themselves, take risks and enhance their understanding of the need for boundaries. Participate in imaginary play and join in conversations with their peers and adults. Use different equipment for mark making as well as more traditional tools for emergent writing.

Positive Relationships

Children build relationships with their peers and adults as part of their everyday lives. Outdoor play supports peer relationships. Turn taking and sharing tools and large equipment the children in making strong peer relationships. Children develop a sense of time when turn taking and a sense of right and wrong.

Parents were an integral part of the planning for our outdoor area, and continue to support the development of this valuable resource by fund raising events. We also ask for parental support when we go on local visits. The Bents Green staff are always appreciative of the support from parents and recognise the contribution that parents make to our setting.

Enabling Environments.

Being outdoors gives children first hand experiences of the weather, seasons and the natural world, we endeavour to access the outdoor area all year round. The children become aware of the changing seasons and the changing weather. By giving the children fist hand experiences outdoors the children access equipment in different sizes and shapes. We have bread crates for building, benches for balancing or sitting, these are just two examples. Our outdoor equipment is multi purpose and the children regularly

use their imagination when playing. The children have the freedom to take risks and explore.

Learning and Development.

Children are able to explore the outdoor environment, play alone or with their friends, take part in turn taking activities and use their imagination during role play, make dens and use problem solving skills, the large crates support construction. We also have open ended materials where then children decide how to use the equipment. The garden soil pit provides the children with sensory experiences and an understanding of how things grow and change with the seasons, the children are fully involved in the planting and harvesting of the crops. Digging and raking soil supports turn taking, understanding safety and physical development. Balls, quoits, and the net ball support physical development and hand eye co ordination.

Role of the staff.

Staff interactions with the children are vital. We endeavour to support and enhance our children's learning and development. Observations of the children by the key person are an important too, in following children's interests and planning activities to further their learning experiences outdoors. This is a key factor in the children's overall development, as a team we are constantly reviewing and updating our outdoor provision.

This policy was reviewed and adapted by

At a meeting.....

Agreed and signed by.....

Position

Date.....

