

Outdoor Play Policy

At Willow Nursery School we value outdoor play as an intrinsic part of the curriculum. By ensuring outdoor play is an integral part of the school routine we consciously seek to transmit a positive attitude to the outdoors and enrich the child's understanding of the world around them.

Active learning experiences outdoors are essential for young children. They give children opportunities to practice their developing skills, make them feel good and to explore their world. It is also important for children's physical, mental and emotional development. We believe that children should begin to take risks and face challenges outdoors. The Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage fully supports playing outdoors.

The following guidelines have been developed to ensure a balance of children's safety and children's development.

Reviewed: Spring 2026

Next review: Spring 2028

Guidelines for Implementation

General

- Ensure that the combination padlocks are on the gates when children are playing outside.
- Encourage children to wear appropriate footwear and clothing outdoors
- Allow children to access the grassed area unless it is extremely muddy or the children are wearing inappropriate footwear.
- Ensure that you are positioned in a strategic place outdoors to ensure that all children can be seen.
- Ensure children keep bikes and scooters away from the safety surface.
- Outside person is responsible for ensuring appropriate hats/gloves are worn and coats are done up

Growing Plants

- Plan activities involving planting, using pots.

Climbing Frame and Slide

- Encourage children to go down the slide with their feet first
- Discourage children from using ropes on the safety surface and while riding on the bikes/scooters
- Encourage children to go up the steps or rope climb rather than up the slide
- Ensure the slide is dry
- Encourage children to wait until the slide is clear before going down.
- Ensure the children's coats are done up

Wooden Climbing Equipment

- Encourage children to follow the red/green signal to recognise when they can and can't use the equipment.
- Encourage children to help each other
- Assist and support children when appropriate with minimal support
- The member of staff planning outside will make the decision about whether the equipment is to be used or not

Sandpit

- Encourage children to use just sand toys in the sandpit
- Encourage children to keep the sand in the sand pit

Wooden bricks and blocks

- Encourage children to only stand on up to 2 bricks
- Allow children to only build up to their shoulder height
- Encourage children to build on the safety mats.
- Encourage children to return bricks to the storage area when they have finished using them

Water Tap

- Encourage children to turn the tap off after each use.

Burma Bridge

- Encourage children to follow the red/green signal to recognise when they can and cannot use the Burma bridge
- The member of staff planning the outside area makes the decision about whether the Burma bridge is used or not

Wheeled Toys

- Encourage children to keep wheeled toys off of the safety surface
- Encourage children to park wheeled toys in the designated parking area.
- Ensure wheeled toys are not taken down the slopes/steps

Crates

- Encourage children to only stand on up to 1 crates
- Allow children to only build up to their shoulder height
- Encourage children to build on the safety mats.
- Encourage children to return crates to the storage area when they have finished using them

Mud Kitchen

- Encourage the children to keep the mud kitchen floor clear.
- Encourage the children to take back mud kitchen equipment when they have finished.

Room 4 Garden

- Ensure that the combination padlock is on the carpark gate and both the three wooden gates are shut when children are playing outside.

Wild Garden

- Encourage the children to use this area to explore for bugs, small animals and butterflies
- Encourage the children to learn about caring for the environment, keeping it tidy and watering plants to maintain their growth
- Encourage the children to use the wild garden with care and safety

Musical Xylophone

- Encourage the children to replace the xylophone beaters when not in use