



# AUTUMN COTTAGE CHILDCARE

# PLAY POLICY

EYFS – Section 1.16, 3.68

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## INTRODUCTION

Play is an essential part of every child's life and vital to their development. It encompasses a wide range of activities and behaviours that are satisfying, creative, and freely chosen by the child. Play can be on their own or with others, boisterous or quiet.

Benefits of play include:

- physical, emotional and spiritual growth
- intellectual and educational development
- acquiring social and behavioural skills
- Helps children to deal with difficult or painful circumstances
- the chance to let off steam and have fun!

## AC GENERAL PLAY POLICY

- Enable all children to have equal access to good quality play opportunities, both indoors and outdoors daily
- Promote inclusive play opportunities recognising children's different abilities and needs, age, gender, and family and social situations
- Ensure that all children are respected and valued and can play free from discrimination or abuse
- Plan and develop play opportunities to cover the EYFS Seven Areas of Learning (EYFS Section 1) in consultation with children and their parents to meet their needs, which are safe, stimulating and appropriate for child's ages and stages of development.
- Develop varied play opportunities which challenge and stimulate children's abilities and ensure they can take part in a range of activities to gain confidence and learn on their own terms
- Ensure children are given opportunities to make choices within play to support their development, and encourage children's own ideas and decisions about what they do and how they do it

## OUTDOOR PLAY & LEARNING

Outdoor play & learning is vital for all age groups, exploring the outdoor environment is important to developing a knowledge and understanding of the world. At the same time exercise is vital to aid the physical development of young children and to encourage them to continue a healthy lifestyle into their adult years.

The AC outdoor learning area is a valuable environment and has a range of outdoor equipment. This includes:



- Sand pits
- Water trays
- Paddling pools
- Ropes for skipping

These give the children the opportunity to learn about danger and risk taking, but within a safe and controlled environment.

AC aims to allow children to actively move between indoors and outdoors in the setting during sessions - Free Flow. AC has staff procedures that ensure Free Flow is safe, educationally valuable, and, of course, enjoyable for children and staff. There will be a balance between physical activities, and more small scale, focused activities, such as mark making or digging.

Even where most children are choosing to play outside, staff will ensure that there are sufficient activities inside to (a) engage the children until Free Flow commences and (b) still cover all EYFS seven areas of learning.

**Appendix A** details the procedures AC follow to ensure outdoor play safety.

## **FOOD & SENSORY PLAY**

As part of AC's play planning, it may incorporate several food and sensory play activities, however certain items will not be offered for safety reasons:

- Nuts - banned from the setting.
- Loose flour - Not be used for sensory play activities for under 2's
- Rice
- Raw red kidney beans
- Jelly cubes



## **APPENDIX A: OUTDOOR PLAY SAFETY PROCEDURES**

### **SUPERVISION**

- The AC Severe Weather Policy will be implemented where applicable
- Staff must ensure the outdoor play area is safe and secure before allowing children access
- Areas are checked for water hazards e.g. water pooling in outdoor equipment / forming ponds or puddles and removed
- Staff will always be on duty in the outside area, positioning themselves where they can see all children that are outside, as far as is practicable
- Staff assigned to outdoor play will record how many children are choosing to go outside, what they are choosing to play with and how they are playing to inform AC planning
- Staff will focus on the safety of the children rather than on any adult-led or adult-directed activities. This is particularly important where there are a high number of children in a session
- One member of staff outside will carry a working walkie-talkie. The corresponding walkie-talkie will remain inside the setting with a designated member of staff
- The 'Golden Rules' will be reinforced with the children, and any specific dangers or issues pointed out to them
- Any children who do not comply with the Golden Rules will, after 2 warnings, be asked to return inside
- Staff will do a regular head count of the total number of children in the garden to ensure ratios are maintained
- One member of staff will act as a 'roaming' person, able to move between indoors and out. This person will assess the best place to be situated, depending on the numbers of children playing indoors/outdoors
- The outdoor area will operate same staff : child ratios as within the setting.

### **EQUIPMENT**

#### **General**

AC has a range of large outdoor equipment. This provides lots of opportunities for developing new physical skills and enjoyment. To ensure play can happen safely, the following procedures apply:

- All play equipment must be checked before allowing children access.
- Any faults or damages must be reported immediately to the Manager and removed if broken or dangerous.
- Children will be encouraged to take turns and share equipment.
- Staff will position themselves so that children are in their line of sight and close enough to large garden equipment to respond to a situation rapidly.

#### **Sandpits**

- Purchase designated play sand, purchased from a recognised source
- Change sand regularly



- Regularly sieve sand for foreign bodies and rinse through with a diluted sterilising agent, if applicable
- Dispose of spilt sand
- Cover the sandpit when not in use to prevent it being soiled by visiting animals
- Teach children not to throw sand and to avoid it getting in their own and others' eyes.

#### **Water Trays & Paddling Pools**

- Support the children to learn about water safety
- Children must never be left unsupervised
- Freshly filled prior to use each session
- Covered when not in use
- Emptied daily to prevent stagnation
- Ensure sufficient towels and spare clothes
- Staff must never make a child go into a paddling pool if the child does not want to but will provide activities the child can do in the pool area
- Ensure parents inform AC if their child has a verruca to allow preventative measures
- Ensure parents provide some form of swimming nappy for toddlers and babies in nappies to prevent pool contamination

#### **Ropes** *(for older children attending wrap around care outside of school hours)*

- **Length:** For individual skipping, when children stand in the middle of the rope and pull the handles upwards, the rope handles should reach the armpits. They can be shortened by tying knots at each end just below the handles.
- **Inappropriate use:** Instruct children in the possible dangers of not using the ropes appropriately and correctly - adult supervision may be necessary.