

Balmalloch Nursery Class



Risky Play Policy

responsi **B**ility

gr**A**ttitude

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

hu**M**ility and forgiveness

persever**A**nce

Love

ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL**S**

h**O**nesty and gener**O**sity

respe**C**t

friends**H**ip & family

A Place of Enthusiastic Learning and Achievement!

Risky Play

In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) all children and young people have the right to play and the right to learn. Playing outdoors enhances learning and is fundamental for children and young people to thrive.

In Balmalloch Nursery Class, we are committed to enabling all of our children to access outdoor play and enjoy the wonder of the natural environment around them. We recognise that children both need and want to take risks in order to explore their limits, venture into new experiences and develop their capacities.

Our Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all children are given access to risky play; to extend their learning and development whilst being supported by knowledgeable, capable, confident staff. Staff will encourage opportunities which engage children in assessing their own risk, leading their own learning and truly thriving in an environment which encompasses challenge and enjoyment in a safe, secure base.

The Care Inspectorate Practice Guidance: '**My World Outdoors**', highlights the importance and benefits of outdoor play in the early years.

Care Inspectorate statement on Risk in Play

"The Care Inspectorate supports care service providers taking a positive approach to risk in order to achieve the best outcomes for children. This means moving away from a traditional deficit model that takes a risk-averse approach, which can unnecessarily restrict children's experiences attending registered services, to a more holistic risk-benefit model. For example, we encourage services to use risk assessment to support children to enjoy potentially hazardous activities such as woodwork using real tools, exploring nature and playing in the mud and rain. We do not expect written risk assessments to be carried out for daily play activities." 30 October 2015

Minister's Supportive Statement

"In June 2013 the Scottish Government published the 'Play Strategy for Scotland', which seeks to improve the play experiences of all children and young people, including those with disabilities or from disadvantaged backgrounds. The strategy aims to ensure all children and young people can access play opportunities in a range of settings which offer variety, adventure and challenge. They must be able to play freely and safely while learning to manage risks and make choices about where, how and when they play according to their age, stage, ability and preference. A huge part of this is giving regulated services the confidence to provide good quality, challenging play opportunities for children in their care.

Real life experiences for children cannot be free of risk; from the very beginning children learn from trial and error, falling and getting up, testing their own boundaries and this enables them to develop their own coping strategies and resilience. It is important too that children with additional support needs also have the chance to experience challenging play - and that quality play opportunities are offered to all children, according to their needs and preferences.

Myth busting in terms of what 'safe care' is for our children is also important. Scotland's children deserve to be cared for in a loving, nurturing environment that includes hugs and the comfort of touch, which is even more important now that children are in care environments from a younger age and for longer periods of time. I am delighted that the Care Inspectorate is supporting care service providers to adopt a more holistic risk-benefit model to help them achieve the best outcomes for children.

This positive approach to risk emphasises confidence in providers using their professional judgement to support, nurture and challenge the children and young people in their care." Aileen Campbell, Minister for Children and Young People 21 January 2016

Our Objectives

- For children to explore the natural environment and all it has to offer; extending their learning and development through opportunities to take risks in a safe, secure and supportive environment.

- For staff feel confident and comfortable supervising children whilst they engage in risky play experiences.
- For children to develop their confidence, resilience and independence skills.
- For parents to feel secure that their child is safe and that all risks have been calculated and to understand that the benefits to their child far outweigh any potential risks.

Guidance

- Risk/Benefit Assessments will be in place to ensure that staff, children and parents enjoy risky play experiences.
- Staff know children as individuals and are able to support and tailor access to risky play so that activities are challenging, enjoyable and within children's capabilities.
- Consideration will be given to children's potential to learn and benefit by taking risks, being encouraged to try new things and develop new skills.
- Staff will assess all areas and equipment, prior to children accessing this.
- Staff will risk assess the area at the beginning and end of every session.
- Children will be encouraged to participate in and share their own thoughts and ideas for risk assessments.
- All staff have a sound and up to date knowledge of outdoor play guidance such as; My World Outdoors and Out to Play and Play Scotland Guidance.

Roles & Responsibilities

- It is the role of the Senior Leadership and Management Team (SL&MT) to ensure Risk/Benefit Assessments are up to date and regularly reviewed.
- The SL&MT will support all staff to ensure that the welfare of all children is paramount.
- The SL&MT will provide support, guidance and signpost professional reading and development for the staff team.
- All staff must ensure that they are up to date with the 'Risky Play Policy' as well as Risk/Benefit Assessments relevant to experiences they are facilitating.

- All staff should ensure they position themselves near by children exploring risky play, in order to provide support, guidance, encouragement and help if and when required.

The Health and Safety Executive recognises the benefits of outdoor play:

Play is great for children's wellbeing and development. When planning and providing play opportunities; the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits. No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped up in cotton wool." Children's Play and Leisure - Promoting a Balanced Approach Health and Safety Executive, 2012

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