



EDGEBOROUGH SCHOOL

## **Outdoor Woodland Learning (OWL)**

(Nursery and Pre-Prep)

## **Introduction**

At Edgeborough we advocate the learning and developmental benefits of outdoor learning for the child. We recognise that children are stimulated by outdoor learning and that over time, opportunities to connect with nature have a very positive impact on the child's sense of self-belief, confidence, enthusiasm, communication, problem-solving and emotional well-being.

Pupils from the Nursery to Year 2 enjoy a range of opportunities, to explore, engage with and learn through the natural environment, not least through our Outdoor Woodland Learning (OWL) programme (Pre-School to Year 2) and regular woodland walks (Nursery to Year 2).

Our aims through outdoor learning in the Nursery and Pre-Prep are to:

- Enjoy and achieve
- Promote balance and well-being
- Develop respect and appreciation of nature
- Build on and further classroom core skills of communication, collaboration, independence and thinking

This policy is for all staff leading and attending OWL lessons and woodland walks.

## **Relevant Linked Policies**

Safeguarding Policy

EYFS General Policy

Missing Child Policy

Supervision Policy

Fire Evacuation Policy

Drafted risk assessments for all woodland activities

## **The OWL Leader:**

- has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of children during OWL
- works with the Head of Pre-Prep to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment of the area, resources and the activities that will be offered
- is familiar with the site
- is aware of and up-to-date on all child protection issues
- is trained in First Aid and has access to First Aid provision
- reviews activities and advises teacher where adjustments may be necessary
- ensures an appropriate ratio of adults to children is kept
- is aware of any medical or special educational needs
- receives regular Safeguarding training through the school and completes required training
- promotes positive behaviour of children in the woods
- has use of a phone in event of an emergency
- contributes observations and images to Tapestry and for marketing purposes

## **Teachers, EYFS Practitioners and Teaching Assistants:**

- look to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- help promote positive and safe behaviour
- take responsibility for the medical or SEND needs of any children
- make sure any individual risk assessments around the child are adhered to

- prepare resources from school required for the session (drinks, snacks)
- be responsible for any personal medication for the children
- look out for anything that might be a threat
- take registers and head counts
- actively supervise the children
- read and follow all drafted risk assessments

**Key procedures to be carried out before and during each session:**

- A thorough safety sweep of the area that will be used during the session to identify and remove or restrict access to any hazards that might cause injury or illness.
- Existing boundaries checked.
- Trees, bushes and other foliage checked for safety (including the potential for falling branches or dead wood, thorns, protruding sticks at eye level, and hazardous berries or fruits or fungi).
- Weather check to ascertain whether forecast may pose a risk (high winds or storms).
- Check that all essential equipment is present and taken to the site.
- Check First Aid kit is fully stocked.
- Leader to explain lesson to accompanying staff (noting any tool risk assessments before commencement of activity).
- Staff to inform OWL Leader of anything they know that might affect the health, safety or wellbeing of any of the participants.
- OWL Leader to prepare equipment and resources.
- Teaching staff to prepare snacks, any medication items and help to change children into appropriate clothes.
- Staff to take a register before leaving the classroom.
- Staff to take lead in evacuation from the site (i.e. should the fire alarm sound).

**Allocation (2023-24):**

EYFS

Class	Day and Time	Staff and Pupils
Pre-School (Group 1)	1 – 3pm Monday	10 pupils and 2 staff
Pre-School (Group 2)	1 – 3pm Tuesday	10 pupils and 2 staff
RHS	1 – 3pm Wednesday	8 pupils and 2 staff
RC	1– 3 pm Thursday	8 pupils and 2 staff

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Class	Day and Time	Staff and Pupils
Year 1	1 – 3pm Monday	10 pupils and 2 staff
Year 1	1 – 3pm Tuesday	10 pupils and 2 staff
Year 2	1 – 3pm Wednesday	12 pupils and 2 staff
Year 2	1– 3 pm Thursday	12 pupils and 2 staff

**OWL Code of Conduct**

Pupils are reminded of the Code of Conduct at the start of each lesson alongside other key safety messages relating to the equipment available and the activity of the day.

- Look after the natural environment and consider how our actions can impact nature.
- Only use tools if you are with an adult and they have said it is okay to do so – never help yourself.
- Stay within the stated boundary.
- Do not put anything in your mouth.

### **In Event of Fire (see Fire Evacuation Policy)**

- If a fire occurs in the wood, staff should use their whistle to quickly assemble children.
- Staff and children should evacuate to the Astro pitch (as per Fire Evacuation Policy).
- Call is made to the Fire brigade and the school Office.

### **In Event of a Missing Child (see Missing Child Policy)**

- Staff assemble children in the seating area.
- Staff take all children back to classroom and call the Office.
- Children are supervised in a classroom by minimal staff.
- All other available staff return to search site and surrounding area.
- If this is not successful after 20 mins, the school's Office will phone the police and the child's parents. Further actions will be guided by the advice of the emergency services.

### **Welfare in the Woods**

- Children are encouraged to use the toilet before heading out to the woods.
- If the child needs a wee while in the woods, they are helped to find a quiet, secluded area away from the group.
- If the child required a poo they can use the woodland potty, or, if they require, they are escorted back to the classrooms.
- Children will use anti-bacterial hand wash following going to the toilet.
- Hand wash is applied before eating and hands are washed on return to school.

### **Clothing**

Parents are requested to provide the following items for OWL:

- Waterproofs should be worn to all outdoor sessions (unless very hot and dry).
- Children must wear long sleeve tops and long trousers.
- Children are to wear wellington boots if wet or muddy and strong, closed in shoes when hot.

### **Use of Tools and Activities in the Woods**

- Use of all tools is risk-assessed and tools are used with caution but also awareness that using small hand tools is an important part of outdoor learning as it enables children to develop new, practical skills that help them develop self-confidence.

- All hand tools are well-maintained, regularly inspected and stored carefully.
- Tool safety is taught from the onset.
- Use of tools is always supervised.
- All activities (including a campfire) are risk-assessed with stipulated safety measures adhered to.
- All woodland play structures such as the mud kitchen, pirate ship, bug hotel and log seats are subjected to frequent checks and feature in the site risk assessment.

## **Woodland Walks: Policy and Procedures**

### **Staff Responsibilities**

- To prepare any medicines, snacks and a first aid kit for the walk.
- Adhere and be aware of safety measures outlined in the Risk Assessment.

### **Safety Measures**

- Supervision ratios are kept (as per government guidance) at all times and as an absolute maximum.
- Individual child risk assessments and SEND needs are adhered to.
- Mobile phones are taken (but not used for images) as a safety precaution.
- Registers and head counts are kept throughout.
- Nursery and Pre-School are encouraged to walk in pairs.
- Children are clearly instructed not to put plants and natural items in their mouths.
- The route stays clear of long grass, poor surfaces, overgrown areas and unsecure site boundaries.
- When crossing the school's drive an adult stands in the road to stop and alert cars.
- Walks are not taken when weather conditions present any safety risk.
- A member of staff is always present with PFA.
- Any food eaten is done so safely with hands washed/sanitised before eating and a suitable spot to eat found.
- Should a child need the toilet or have an accident they return to the setting to change or be supervised for a 'wild wee'. Supervision ratios are kept or the whole group return to setting.

### **Missing Child (see Missing Child Policy)**

In the unlikely event that a child is identified as missing from the group:

- Staff assemble children quickly and call the school's Office for assistance.
- Staff take all children back to their classroom (children stay as one group with as few staff as possible, while still keeping mandated ratios).
- All available staff search for child in surrounding areas and the route taken thus far.
- If this is not successful, after 20 minutes, call the police and the child's parents.
- Further actions will be guided by the advice of the emergency services.

### **Clothing**

Parents are requested to provide the following items for woodland walks:

- Waterproofs should be worn to all outdoor sessions (unless very hot and dry).
- Children must wear long sleeve tops and long trousers.
- Children are to wear wellington boots if wet or muddy and strong, closed in shoes when hot.

